

# Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment



May 2021

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2019, Basingstoke and Deane Council commissioned Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA) to undertake a review of the Borough's 2001 Landscape Character Assessment. The updated Landscape Character Assessment will be part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and will help guide spatial planning and development management decisions within the Borough.
- 1.2 The original 2001 study was prepared by Landscape Design Associates in association with Wessex Archaeology, and forms the basis for the revised Landscape Character Assessment, updated as appropriate.
- 1.3 The 2001 study has been updated taking into account both changes to the landscape, and the current best practice landscape character assessment guidance set out by Natural England's 'An approach to landscape character assessment' published in 2014.
- 1.4 The landscape overview and Landscape Types from the 2001 assessment have been reviewed and are reproduced in Sections 2 and 3 of this 2021 update, with revisions.
- 1.5 Change in the overall landscape character of the Borough since 2001 has been subtle, but some additions to the landscape including extensions to settlement, power generation, communications and other infrastructure, have had a noticeable effect. This 2021 update maintains the Character Areas set out in the 2001 assessment, with amendments and additions to their descriptions, and a limited number of amendments to their boundaries. Key issues set out in the 2001 assessment have been updated, and landscape guidance for both land management and built development have been added for each Character Area. The updated Area Character Areas are mapped and described in Section 4.
- 1.6 Settlement analysis from the 2001 assessment has been updated as appropriate and is included in Section 5 of this report.

## 2 BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane is a predominantly rural, agricultural district which covers a land area of some 245 square miles of north-east Hampshire, shown by Figure 1. It embraces a diverse pattern of landscapes, including rolling chalk downland, pastoral river valleys, historic parkland, remnants of ancient forests and intimate mosaics of lowland farmland and woodland, with a scattering of farms, villages and hamlets, and a few larger settlements, including Basingstoke.
- 2.2 This patterning is the product of the interaction between the physical structure of the landscape and the nature of the vegetation and land uses that cover it. To understand what makes places distinctive, it is helpful to summarise the main formative influences - both physical and human - that have shaped the Borough's landscape over time.
- Physical influences**
- 2.3 The basic structure of any landscape is formed by its underlying rocks and relief. Geology, and the processes of weathering, erosion and deposition, influence the form of the landscape, its drainage and soils. In turn, the patterns of vegetation, land use and, to a degree, the location and form of settlements, are affected.

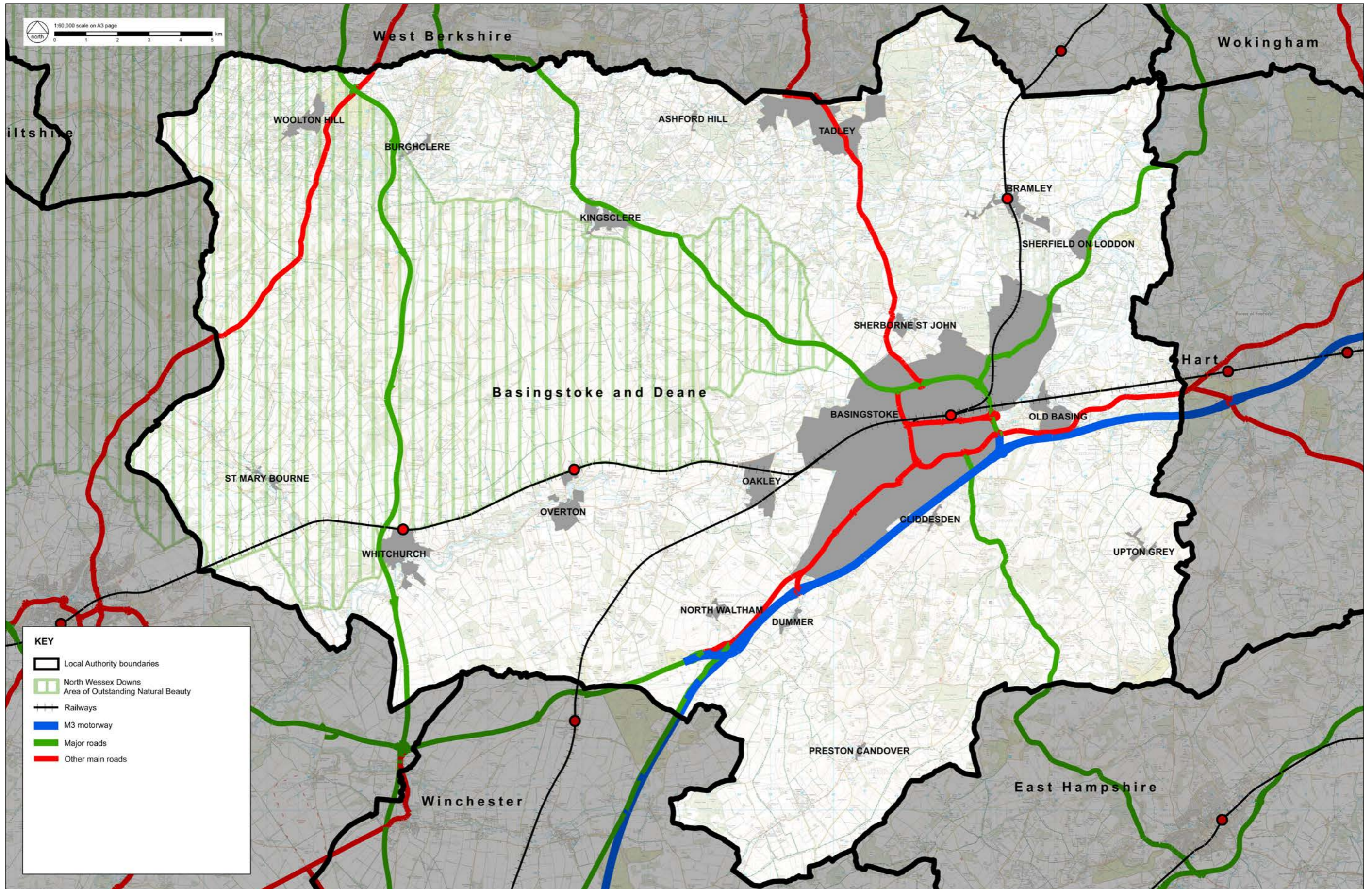


Figure 1 Basingstoke and Deane

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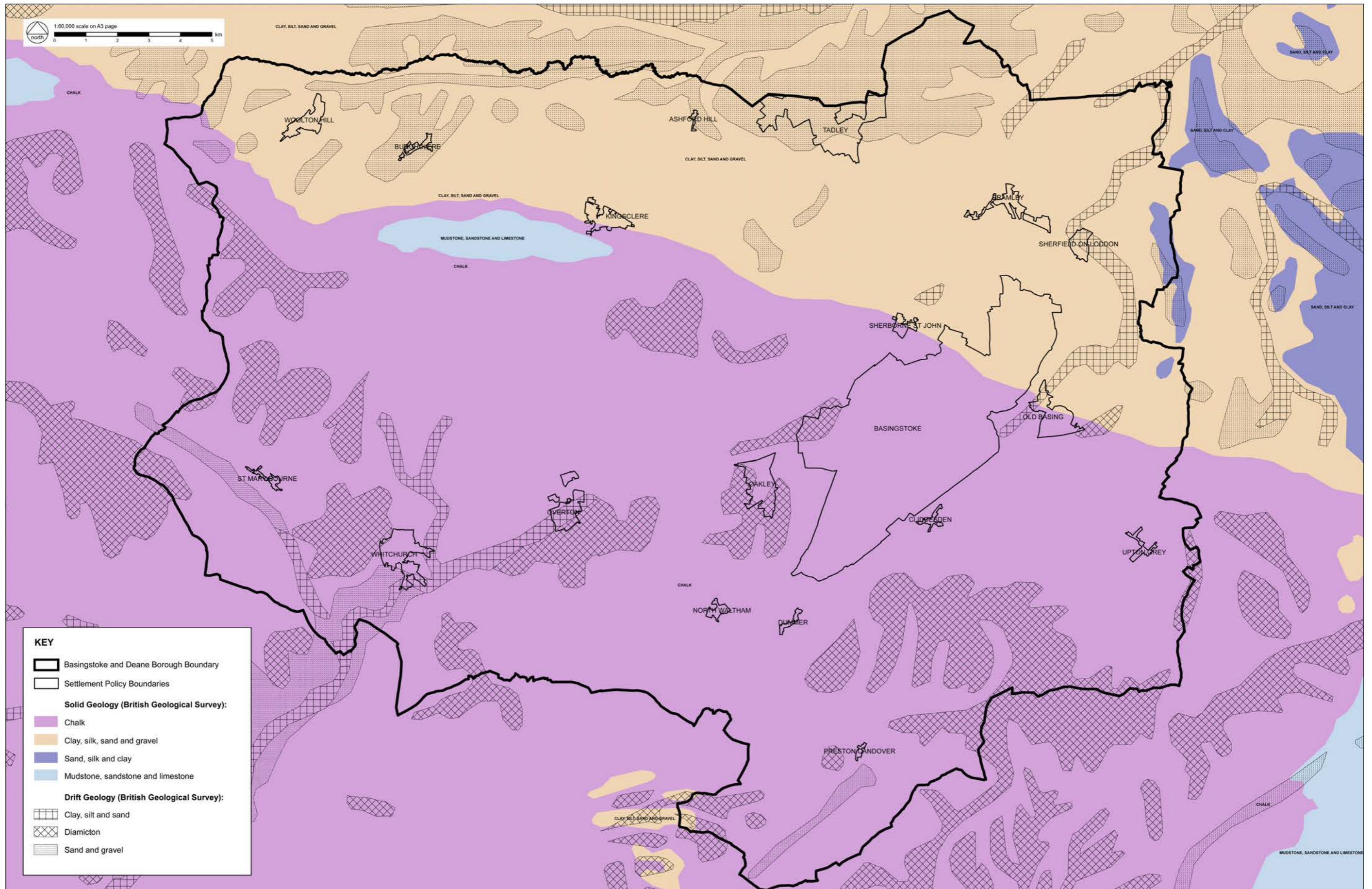


Figure 2 Geology

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### **Geology and landform**

- 2.4 The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane lies across the boundary of two distinct geological formations, producing a comparatively varied geological structure that has a strong influence upon landform and landscape character (see Figure 2).
- 2.5 The southern part of the Borough is dominated by the deep chalk bed of the North Downs, laid down in the Cretaceous period when this part of England lay beneath a vast, shallow and warm inlet of the sea. This belt of chalk stretches right across Hampshire and its neighbouring counties of Wiltshire and Sussex, forming the distinctive downland landscapes of southern England.
- 2.6 The chalk layer has been tilted to form a ridge and eroded on its exposed northern face to create the distinctive, steep escarpment west of Kingsclere that is composed of the comparatively hard rocks of the Middle Chalk. The escarpment is the most prominent topographical feature within the Borough and includes the highest point of land at Dean Hill near East Woodhay. Immediately below the scarp, erosion has also exposed a narrow belt of Reading Beds and Upper Greensand which run parallel to the scarp face.
- 2.7 From its northern escarpment, the bed of Upper Chalk dips southwards, forming the characteristically smoothly rolling downland, broad plateaux and shallow valleys that are distinctive features of chalk scenery. Much of the Upper Chalk is overlain by superficial deposits of clay with flints, laid down during the inter-glacial period, particularly on the plateau in the vicinity of Ellisfield and Herriard. This clay cap masks the chalk geology and gives rise to different soils and surface conditions, often less suited to intensive agriculture and typically clothed in broadleaved woodland.
- 2.8 The northern part of the Borough lies on the south-western edge of the London Basin, where the chalk strata dip towards the north and are buried beneath the younger deposits of sands and clays laid down during the Tertiary period during progressive periods of marine flooding.
- 2.9 These consist of three main geological deposits: London Clay in the east, which is overlain by Bagshot Beds and Bracklesham Beds (sands) in the west. These deposits are all comparatively soft and are easily eroded to form low-lying landscapes of subdued relief. However, their variability and sequence of outcrops has produced a complex pattern of soils, vegetation types and land use character across the area.
- 2.10 Later Quaternary deposits of river and valley gravels occur along the main river valleys and deposits of alluvium also follow the outlines of the complex river network. Locally, there are also quite extensive High Level Terrace Drift Deposits (plateau gravels), such as those found in the vicinity of Silchester and Tadley and north of Highclere and Burghclere.

### **Drainage**

- 2.11 The chalk dip slope is dissected by dry valleys of river systems that were formed immediately after the Ice Ages when the chalk would have been frozen at depth and thus impermeable and able to support streams of meltwater from the ice sheets further north (see Figure 3). These have long since disappeared and the porosity of the chalk means that rivers and streams are now comparatively rare. The main exception is the River Test with its tributary, the Bourne Rivulet, which is a nationally famous chalk river and arises near Ashe to the east of Overton. The river flows southwards, dissecting the chalk dip slope, and eventually reaches the Solent. Its clear alkaline water supports salmon and trout fishing and watercress beds.

- 2.12 Further north in the Borough, a line of springs arises at the junction of the chalk and the impervious clays of the lowlands. This produces a complex drainage network, which contrasts markedly with the chalk areas to the south. Many of these numerous springs form tributaries of the River Enborne which flows east-west along the northern boundary of the Borough. Others form the source and tributaries of the Loddon and Lyde Rivers which flow northwards across the Tertiary deposits of the Thames Basin. The lowest point within the Borough lies at 49 metres, adjacent to the River Loddon where it crosses the boundary into Wokingham District.

### **Soils and agricultural land capacity**

- 2.13 A variety of soil types occur across the Borough and influence the capability of the land to support agriculture. Soils on the chalk tend to be well-drained and highly calcareous and are dominated by brown earths on the higher ground of the downs. These soils are often intensively farmed, but relief and soil depth are limiting factors. The shallow soils of the steeper slopes are less suitable for cultivation and are often wooded, colonised by scrub or under permanent pasture. Agricultural quality on the chalk is predominantly Grade 3 with localised pockets of Grade 2 to the east and west of Basingstoke.
- 2.14 Soils on the Upper Greensand (a variety of greyish white sandstone) to the north of the scarp are typically well-drained, light and loamy. This predominantly Grade 3 quality agricultural land supports an open arable landscape.
- 2.15 The more complex geology of the London Basin gives rise to a similarly mixed pattern of soils and agricultural land value. Areas which are underlain by London Clay typically comprise seasonally waterlogged fine, silty or loamy soils over clay. These are mostly of Grade 3 quality and support a mixture of pasture and arable crops. However, poor drainage is a limiting factor and gives rise to less productive, heavy soils that are mostly under woodland or, occasionally, lowland heath vegetation. Other gleyed soils occur along the main river valleys where the fine, silty and loamy soils are variously affected by groundwater and subject to flooding, reducing their agricultural quality to Grade 4.
- 2.16 A deep peaty calcareous soil occurs in the flood plains of the River Test, south of Whitchurch, and in the Loddon and Lyde valleys south of Sherfield. This is a nationally uncommon type of soil and, in the case of the Loddon and Lyde valleys, is the only example occurring within the Thames Basin.
- 2.17 Well-drained and very acidic sandy soils occur above the High Level Terrace Drift Deposits found at Silchester, Burghclere and Newtown, whilst well-drained gravelly soils are associated with the area in the vicinity of Mortimer West End. Areas of forest and remnant heath-land are characteristic of the thin acid soils.

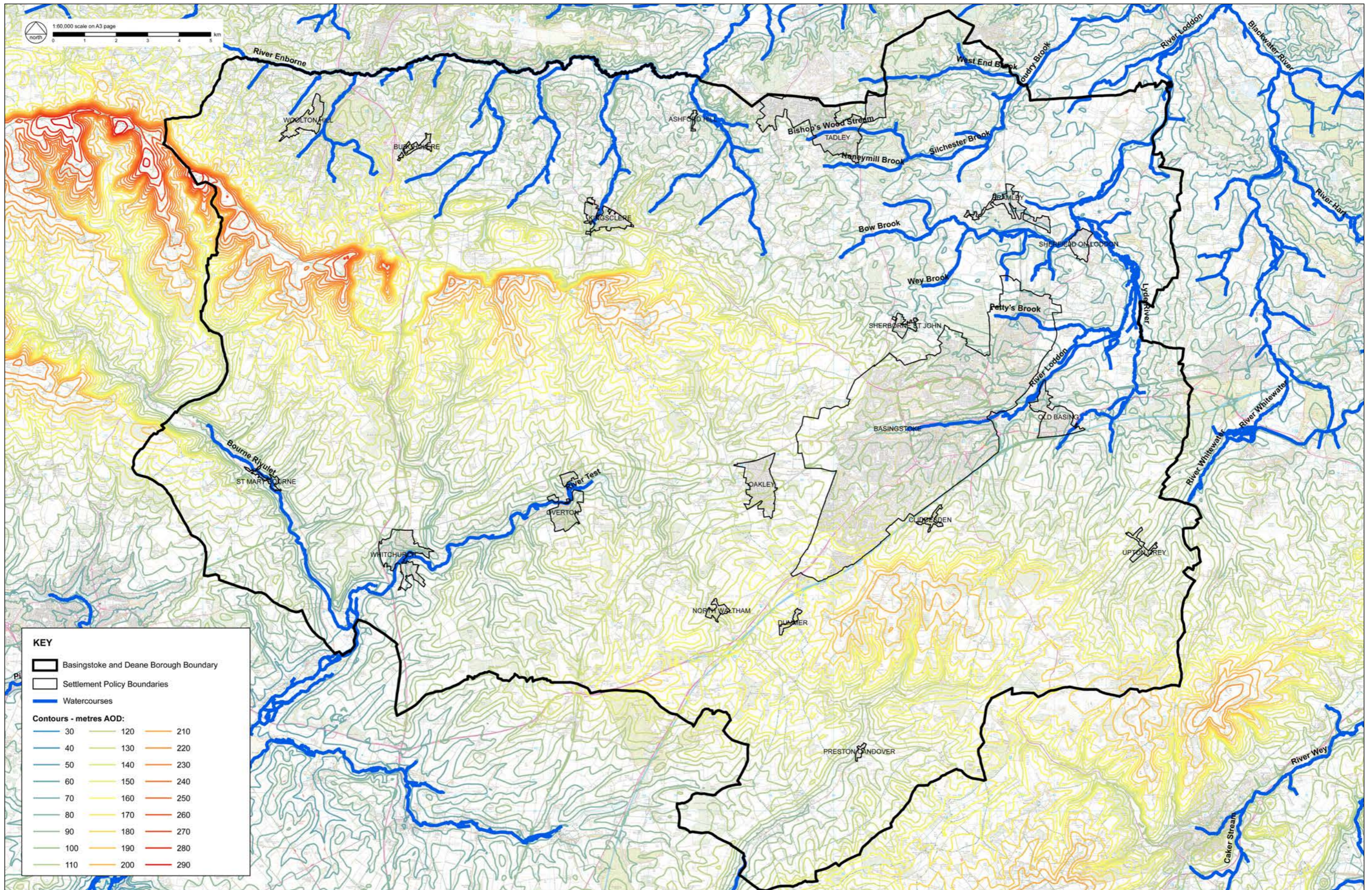


Figure 3 Landform and Drainage

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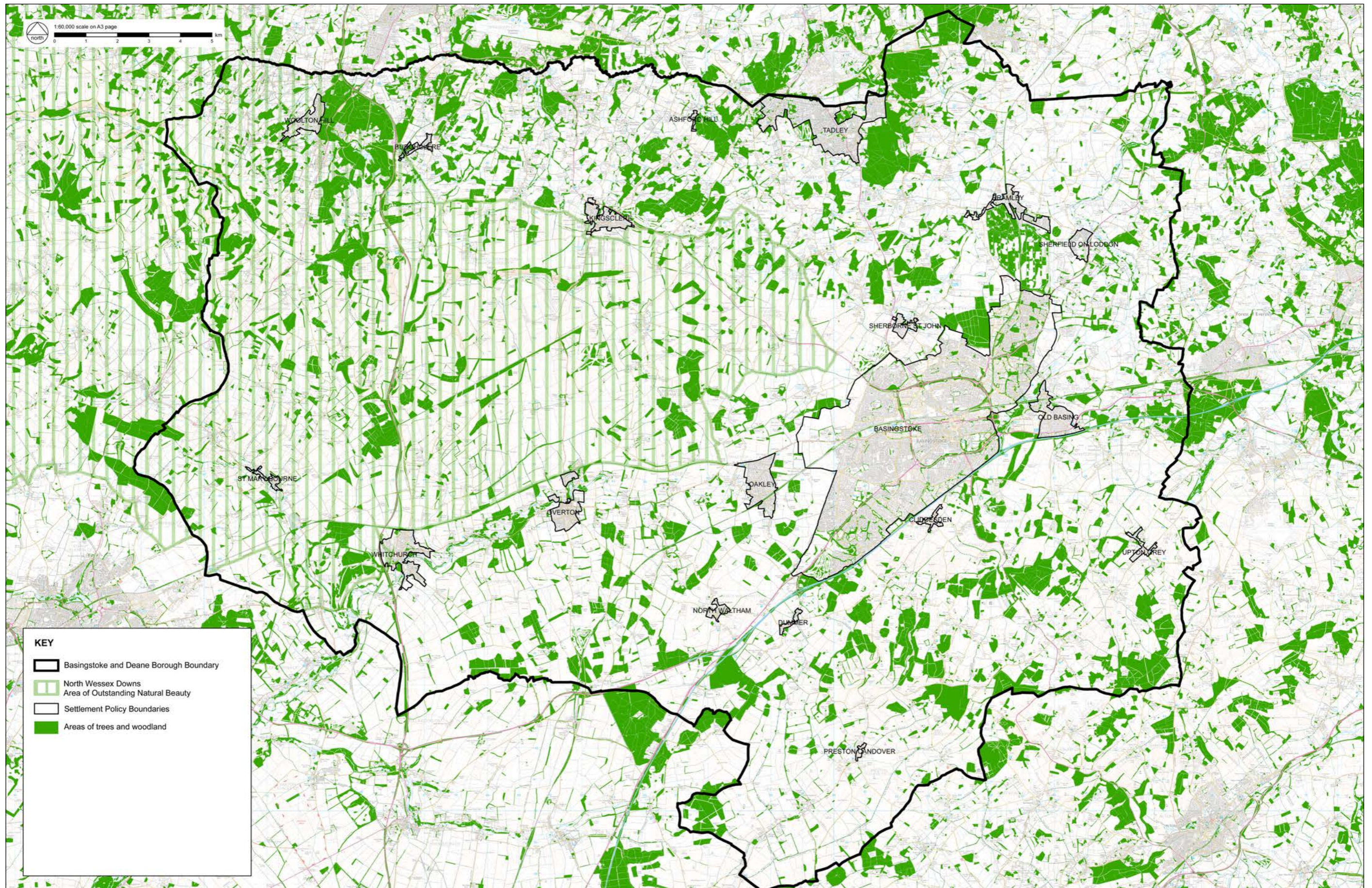


Figure 4 Trees and Woodland

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### **Ecology and vegetation**

- 2.18 The distribution of vegetation across the Borough is strongly associated with the area's geology, soils and land use over time. As Figure 4 indicates, the Borough is well-wooded, predominantly by broadleaved woodland, with a relatively small number of coniferous plantations. Much of the broadleaved woodland is ancient and constitutes an important semi-natural habitat. Similarly, the 160ha of scattered heathland remnants, plus the fragments of species rich chalk downland, remnant fen and water meadows, are all important sites of biodiversity. In many cases, this has been recognised through international, national, or local designations.
- 2.19 At the international level, the influence of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, extends into the north-east corner of the Borough. Of national interest are the Borough's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), namely areas which are judged by Natural England to be of outstanding ecological importance. Many of the SSSIs are associated with the relic chalk grasslands and their wild plant communities; others with areas of chalk arable, important for ground nesting birds. Two other major categories of habitats that have been designated SSSIs are the Borough's ancient woodlands and its unimproved meadows. In terms of distribution, the largest SSSIs are in the northern half of the Borough, notably Pamber Forest and Silchester Common near Tadley, Highclere Park, and numerous sites along the escarpment. The valleys of the two main rivers are another rich source of SSSIs.
- 2.20 In addition, the Borough contains numerous Sites of Importance for Nature (SINCs) designations which protect semi-natural vegetation habitats of scarce and rare species. They are distributed throughout the Borough, the most famous example being the scarp chalk downland site of Watership Down which supports a rich chalk flora.

### **Human influences**

#### **Prehistoric influences**

- 2.21 The earliest inhabitants of the Borough, during the Palaeolithic period (500,000-10,000 BC), left no visible reminders of their presence. Flint implements recovered from the river valleys and from the chalk downlands around Basingstoke do show that humans were there, at least periodically, probably in low numbers. They lived in a harsh climate and probably survived by following and preying on herds of game. As the ice retreated due to the climate change (the end of the Ice Age), there was a gradual spread of forest cover over much of the area.
- 2.22 There are indications that the process whereby the landscape we recognise today was altered and created by human influence was underway during the Mesolithic period (8500-4000 BC). The human population probably began to open up small clearings amongst the tree cover. Again, there are no visible monuments associated with this low density population who appear to have led a nomadic lifestyle, exploiting natural resources through hunting and gathering. Concentrations of stone implements show that certain particular locations and types of environment (particularly those rich in natural resources) were favoured for repeated visits or longer occupation.
- 2.23 During the Neolithic period (4000-2400 BC) forest clearance continued and was expanded, as the gradual adoption of a more settled way of life, supported by agriculture and domestic animals, allowed larger and more sedentary population groups to emerge. The lighter soils of the chalk downlands appear to have been preferred locations for occupation. Although the domestic sites of this period are largely invisible in the landscape of today and are recorded in limited numbers through excavation, there is evidence of a more monumental nature, which does remain visible, although much altered by time. In the Borough, the monuments are limited to a very small number of long barrows, i.e. burial mounds, often deliberately sited to be visible from a considerable distance. One example is a long barrow at Woodcott.

- 2.24 There are more visible monumental reminders of the Bronze Age (2400-700 BC) occupants of the Borough – although, once again, the evidence for settlements is limited to below ground features and artefacts. The monuments are predominantly round barrows - burial mounds that may be found singly, or as groups known as barrow cemeteries. Round barrows are Hampshire's most commonly preserved type of prehistoric monument. Examples include Seven Barrows near Burghclere. During the Bronze Age, forest clearance continued, and this led to the opening up of large tracts of land. Complex patterns of land use were established. There is evidence of the use of fields from the chalk downlands. This includes remnant field systems visible on aerial photographs and occasionally lynchets (earthworks formed by soil building up against field boundaries). Most of the people appear to have lived in small, enclosed farmsteads amongst the fields. The remnants of long deep linear ditches (which probably identified land divisions) have been recorded, for example at Ladle Hill.
- 2.25 It was probably due to the acid nature of clay with flint soils that they were not preferred for Bronze Age agriculture. Within the Borough, woodland would appear to have persisted on some of the soils whose acidity was difficult to remedy in prehistoric times. It is believed that it was during the Bronze Age that the heathlands in the north of the Borough began to be formed. Due to pressure for resources on the lighter soils of the downland slopes, new areas were utilised for arable agriculture. The over-exploitation of areas of poorer soil led to a relatively rapid deterioration in soil fertility and, subsequently, in the types of vegetation they could support. The resulting vegetation could, however, be utilised for grazing by animals, and therefore gained some value, often as part of common or wasteland. The creation of the later Royal Hunting Forests preserved some areas of heathland.
- 2.26 The processes, which had begun during earlier prehistoric periods, continued and intensified during the Iron Age (700 BC-AD 43). A tribal social structure that may have been emerging earlier appears to have become well established. Territories could be defended from hill forts such as Beacon Hill, Winklebury, and Ladle Hill, around which were field systems and other managed landscapes, such as pasture fields. Prehistoric trackways such as The Harrow Way (which runs to the north of Whitchurch), can still be found in the landscape. Long-term occupation of settlements is indicated in the archaeological record, and the Borough has produced a wealth of such sites including Battle Down Farm. The principal local tribe was the Atribatae and their oppidum (a large permanent settlement) became the focus of Roman administration in the area with the founding of Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum) on the site.

#### **Roman influences**

- 2.27 The Roman conquest of AD 43 brought some changes reflecting the new centralised administration, although there was much continuity from the earlier period. An infrastructure of roads was laid down - the lines of many still exist to this day. These include roads from Silchester to London (The Devil's Causeway), to Old Sarum and to Winchester. The latter still marks the western extent of Basingstoke.
- 2.28 The Roman town of Silchester has been preserved to a remarkable extent because the site was abandoned following the withdrawal of the Roman army. Standing Roman walls are rarely visible as landscape features in Britain but may be seen at Silchester. There was a concentration of Roman villas around the former town, although today they are preserved only as below-ground features. The villas appear to have functioned as administrative centres for the large agricultural estates into which much of the landscape was divided. Cultivation of heavier soils was enabled by the introduction of new agricultural methods and implements, allowing areas other than the light chalk soils of the downlands to be utilised.



### Anglo-Saxon influences

- 2.29 It is likely that the location of many of today's hamlets and villages was established during the Anglo-Saxon (410- 1066) and early medieval periods (c.11th-12th centuries). The preferred types of structures built, and continuity of occupation, means that archaeological evidence for settlement can be difficult to find. There are relatively few visible remnants of the Anglo-Saxon era to be seen in the land- scape today, although some settlements are named in documents (mainly Charters) from this time (for example, Whitchurch). Churches were a feature of the period and some existing later churches may have been built on the site of, or retain elements from, an earlier (Saxon or medieval) church. Possible examples are Old Basing and Whitchurch. Similarly, the historic core of some settlements may date back to this period. There is also some limited documentary evidence from the period.
- 2.30 Many large estates are known to have become well-established from this time. For example, it is likely that (Old) Basing was an important royal estate in mid-Saxon times. Forest clearance is likely to have continued throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.
- 2.31 The Domesday survey of 1086 provides an insight into how parts of the English landscape were organised just before and after the Norman Conquest of AD 1066. Important landowners, particularly the King and the Church, controlled large parts of the countryside either directly or indirectly. A number of the settlements within the Borough were mentioned in the Domesday Survey (for example Boughurst, Overton, Old Basing, and Whitchurch). Although pasture and sheep are not generally mentioned in the Hampshire Domesday it is probable that they were of economic importance to many settlements even at this time.

### The influence of the medieval period

- 2.32 During the medieval period (1066-1499) the Royal Forests of Pamber and of Eversley were established at the northern edge of the Borough. The term Royal Forest refers not to a wooded area but to an area subject to special Forest Law and used for hunting. Pamber Forest was located in a less fertile area, as were other Hampshire Forests. Research has shown that clearance occurred within these Forests. Deer Parks were also established during this period and banks and ditches (pales) which surrounded such parks have been preserved as visible earthworks in a number of places such as the Great Park at Weston Patrick. The Bishop of Winchester was a powerful landowner in Hampshire and his numerous residences generally had a Deer Park attached to them. The 13th and 14th century landscapes within such parks were the product of careful management techniques, including exploitation of timber coppicing and the maintenance of meadows for fodder. Despite the fact that many bishopric parks were disparked in the 16th and 17th centuries, a number of such parks have been pre- served within later (often larger) parklands landscaped for great houses (for example at Highclere).
- 2.33 Defensive sites, such as Motte and Bailey castles or ring works have also been preserved, and there is a concentration of these on the clay lands and wooded areas of the north-west of the Borough - partly coincident with areas of former medieval forest. Examples include Beaurepaire House and Sherfield Hall. Moated sites have also been preserved, with a concentration in the north-east of the Borough. The Bishop of Winchester founded at least two planned 'new towns' in the Borough in the medieval period (Newtown, and Overton), and Whitchurch was granted town status. Such sites required a flat site, access to water and good communications. They might be founded on the site of, or close to, an existing settlement or on a new site. In terms of transport, there was an emphasis on east-west routes from London, via Basingstoke, to Salisbury. There were, however, minor north-south routes through Overton, Hurstbourne Priors and Whitchurch, and the latter was turnpiked in 1762. There was a concentration of medieval settlements around

Basingstoke. Hamlets, which probably started as single farms, were common, except on the central chalk downs.

- 2.34 Close to settlements, the downlands in the earlier medieval period were, as before, probably mainly exploited for arable agriculture. Much of this was based on a system, whereby each 'village was surrounded by two or three large open and unhedged fields, divided into a multitude of strips, all individually owned but farmed in common'. Sheep and cows were also grazed on downland pasture. Small irregular clearances (known as 'assarts') of wood- land, heathland or common for private grazing or arable production were seen from the 13th-16th centuries. Small- scale enclosures (encroachments) – often worked by land- less labourers, became more common on the poorer soils of forests and heaths, as royal interest in forests waned. There was also some enclosure by agreement at this time. During the medieval period there were fluctuations in the population size as epidemics of the plague and a decline in arable farming combined to produce abandoned or shrunken settlements. Shrunken villages may have been reduced to earthworks or cropmarks and have consequently been 'lost'. Others may be known from remnant buildings, such as churches, left in an apparently empty land- scape, or through place-name or cartographic evidence. There are many examples in the Borough, including Hatch on the eastern edge of Basingstoke, Old Burghclere and Newtown at the extreme north of the Borough. Emparking was one major cause of villages being lost or moved. Another factor may have been the reduction of the water table on the chalk which may have caused some former 'rivers' to become 'winterbournes' only (there are some shrunken or deserted settlements on higher chalk).
- 2.35 The increased pace of enclosure of the open fields was a principal change in the post-medieval period. In some places the open fields began to be enclosed either by agreement or piecemeal. One major influence was the continued growth of the importance of sheep farming – particularly on the chalk downlands. The profitability of sheep for the production of wool peaked in the sixteenth century. Overproduction led to a general collapse in wool prices at the end of the sixteenth century. However, the number of sheep in Hampshire remained high, as the sheep-wheat link became a more developed and specialised agricultural system.

### The influence of the post-medieval period

- 2.36 In the 17th and 18th centuries social and economic changes, combined with developments in agricultural practices, began to lead to changes in the landscape. There was a growth in arable agriculture on the former down- lands. The thin, low nutrient soils of these areas could be exhausted rapidly by arable agriculture, if steps were not taken to maintain them. It was recognised that enclosing sheep in folds improved the soil fertility. This led to the enclosure of open downland, in order to control grazing more efficiently. An increased use of root crops (mainly as fodder for sheep) resulted in more sheep and thus more manure, whilst growing clover and grass on 'resting' arable land also improved fertility. The construction of drainage systems allowed controlled flooding of water- meadows in the valley bottoms. This important development provided early spring food for the large numbers of sheep in the 17th and 18th centuries.
- 2.37 In the late 18th and early 19th centuries the process of enclosure was intensified and formalised by Acts of Parliament. Hedges became more commonplace as the land was divided into geometrically shaped fields. As agricultural methods, crops and livestock continued to be improved, there was a pressure for wastes, forests and heathlands to be enclosed (not always legally), and old woodland continued to be cleared. The pattern of the landscape that emerged at this time can still be traced today, although in many areas the hedges which marked the

enclosures have since been removed to allow access and working space for large modern machinery.

2.38 In the Post-medieval period communications improved with the construction of such visible landscape features as turnpike roads, canals (some of which were later infilled but the routes may often be traced), and railways. There are many important post-medieval houses and estates throughout the Borough. Some were based on earlier estates, and may incorporate earlier deer parks and/or hunting lodges within more recent designed landscaped gardens or parkland. Some of these properties, such as Highclere, still sit within their estates and still form landscape entities. Others, for example Basing House, have become largely isolated.

2.39 In modern times the landscape has been influenced by a number of factors, including the military (for example the complex at Bramley), agricultural practices and woodland removal. After the Second World War large areas of ancient woodland were removed for agricultural use or were replaced with plantations. Extensive ploughing of the downlands and hedgerow removal continued, encouraged by the post Second World War emphasis on food production. Farm holdings increased in size and many farmsteads converted to private residences. Large areas of heathland were also lost after the war, through lack of management and through woodland and bracken encroachment.

2.40 Whilst the rural landscape continues to support and reflect the importance of farming, the tremendous growth in the population of the Borough has produced a simultaneous growth in housing, industry, shopping and leisure facilities. This growth in the Borough's towns and villages, and the expansion of the road network, including the M3 motorway, further reflects the way that human influences have shaped today's landscape.

#### **Forces for Change**

2.41 The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane is a predominantly rural district with some outstanding areas of landscape and a high proportion of very attractive, unspoilt countryside. The importance of its landscape at a national level is confirmed by the designation of approximately one third of the countryside of the Borough within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.42 The landscape has undergone considerable changes over time, as a result of a variety of different forces. Historically, changes in agricultural practice and socio-economic activity affecting the landscape have been comparatively gradual but, during much of the 20th century, the pace of change increased. Much of this change has had a negative impact on the landscape, but more positive trends are emerging. This section briefly examines the principal forces for change that have affected the landscape, historic and ecological resources of the Borough and are likely to influence its character in the future.

#### **Agriculture**

2.43 Post-war agricultural change has had a significant impact on the character of the countryside, with widespread intensification of agriculture causing a dramatic reduction in the extent of hedgerows, trees, species-rich grasslands and many other semi-natural wildlife habitats and landscape features. These impacts have had a significant effect on the Borough's landscape with:

- Widespread loss of permanent grassland to arable cultivation on the chalklands.
- Significant losses of hedgerows across the Borough, especially in the east around Stratfield Saye.

- Substantial loss of heathland vegetation to agriculture.
- A significant decline in the condition of remnant heath-land and chalk grassland resulting from lack of management and invasion of scrub and woodland.
- Loss of ponds and wetlands through drainage and ploughing of previously uncultivated land.

2.44 However, in recent years, agricultural subsidies have been gradually designed to encourage more environmentally friendly farming. The cumulative effect of these schemes is likely to have a positive impact on the landscape of the Borough. Sensitive management is now being carried out in many areas, evidenced in the replanting of hedgerows, encouragement of hedgerow trees, and generally a more careful use of herbicides and fertilisers in field margins and near watersides.

#### **Forestry and woodland**

2.45 Approximately 15% of the total area of the Borough is occupied by woodland and copses, considerably in excess of the national average. Much of this is ancient semi-natural woodland of high landscape, nature conservation and historic landscape value. Although there have been very significant reductions in the extent of woodland during the twentieth century, census figures from the 1990s indicate that woodland cover is now increasing within the Borough, helped by significant tree planting on estates. The critical issue is the condition of the existing resource, and the re-emergence of traditional management practices such as coppicing needs to be encouraged. The more sensitive management practices that are being carried out in some wooded and agricultural areas, highlight the key role that landowners and farmers continue to play in caring for the landscape.

#### **Nature conservation**

2.46 The Borough is a rich area for wildlife, and yet has suffered great losses during the past 200 years as habitats have been lost to development, or degraded by agricultural practices and afforestation. The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership (embracing a range of organisations) was formed in 1997 to help halt this trend, and to advance the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the county. To this end, it has set out a 'Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire' which, in addition to describing the county's biodiversity, identifies habitats and species of priority concern and proposes a framework for action. By establishing working groups to implement detailed action plans, it is hoped that the biodiversity value of the Borough will be conserved and enhanced for future generations. The work already being carried out by some farmers and landowners to raise biodiversity levels on intensively farmed land offers encouragement for the future.

#### **Urban expansion, traffic and development issues**

2.47 In common with much of southern England, the Borough has experienced significant expansion of urban areas, particularly Basingstoke. The pressure for further growth of towns and villages continues apace. Apart from the loss of open countryside to development, the landscape may suffer from urbanising influences on adjacent rural areas, including the effects of new recreational activities, and additional traffic on rural roads and lanes. These impacts are already evident in the landscape around the edges of Basingstoke, and many villages and lanes within the Borough suffer from traffic levels which they were not designed to cope with. This can result in congestion, and in damaged hedge banks or verges where over-large lorries have passed.

2.48 New road building and widening has had an impact on the Borough landscape over recent years. The landscape immediately adjacent to major road corridors is affected by noise and visual intrusion (often of associated development such as service areas and lighting), which detracts

from its rural character and sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Other developments, including in particularly recent trends in energy generation, such as solar farms and wind turbines have also had an effect.

- 2.49 More subtle changes resulting from development include the suburbanisation of the countryside and rural settlements. These arise from the introduction of non-agricultural land uses, such as golf courses, and the gradual erosion of local distinctiveness in built form as traditional features have been replaced with standard, uncharacteristic alternatives, ornamental planting and fencing. Other urbanising influences include unsympathetic road improvements, and the introduction of intrusive lighting and signage in rural areas. Local distinctiveness has also been subtly undermined in places by the planting of inappropriate species. One further issue that has come to prominence is the need for development to take account of possible increased flood risks associated with climate change.

#### **Access to the countryside**

- 2.50 The Borough has an excellent network of public footpaths. However, there remains scope for access to be improved in certain parts of Basingstoke and Deane, particularly enhancing links between built up areas, ensuring that new development does not cut off access to open areas, and to increase public awareness of the many opportunities that exist to walk in the countryside.

#### **Variations in landscape character**

- 2.51 The broad influences and processes of change described above help to explain the overall pattern of landscape elements and character within the Borough. However, this picture needs to be simplified if it is to be properly understood and used to inform planning and management policy. The sorting of landscape resources into units of distinct and recognisable character is an important way of achieving this understanding and is now common practice in landscape assessment.
- 2.52 This study examines variations in character in a number of ways:
- By identifying generic historic landscape types or groups of types, which represent distinctive and coherent combinations of historic features, or areas of landscape with common historic origins.
  - By defining a number of generic landscape types, which represent distinctive combinations of landform and landcover elements that repeat across the Borough, without being related directly to specific places.
  - By defining a number of generic townscape types, which represent areas of built form with distinctive townscape and often historic characteristics.
  - By integrated character areas, representing larger tracts of rural or urban landscape, which have a coherent and recognisable local identity or sense of place, derived from distinctive combinations of landscape, historic landscape or townscape types and their particular geographical location and context.

### **3 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE TYPES**

#### **Historic Landscape Types**

- 3.1 The starting point to understanding the character of the Borough's landscape in an integrated way is to understand the distribution of historic landscape types, with The Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation used as the principal framework, verified and amended where necessary through further assessment. The broad categories of those present in Basingstoke and Deane are illustrated in Figure 5.

#### **Landscape Types**

- 3.2 Historic landscape types can be defined objectively on the basis of archive material, mapping and photographic material. However, in themselves they do not explain landscape character as experienced on the ground today. This is done through the identification of generic landscape types which in their appearance reflect both the natural and cultural processes that created them.
- 3.3 The County-wide assessment produced by Hampshire County Council defines a range of generic landscape types for the rural areas of Hampshire, divided into two broad groupings: the chalklands and lowland mosaic. The County-wide assessment identifies a total of ten rural types within the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane. These were subsequently examined and refined as part of the 1995 Borough-wide assessment, which resulted in the alteration of some boundaries and some sub-division of types, defining thirteen landscape types within the Borough.
- 3.4 These landscape types were re-examined as part of the 2001 Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment and further refinements were made to reflect even more detailed variations in local character, particularly the variations in scale of the landscape and in enclosure created by the structure of hedgerows and woodlands. This resulted in the definition of 30 different landscape types across the Borough, although some represent quite subtle variations on a main type. Despite this different and more detailed approach to defining local landscape character, there remains a strong correlation between the landscape types identified within the three assessments. In defining landscape types, substantial effort was put into ensuring consistency with the landscape types of adjoining local authorities, with consistency achieved in the 'grain' and nature of landscape types.
- 3.5 This 2021 update of the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment retains the landscape types of the 2001 assessment as set out below, and illustrated on Figure 6. It is important to emphasise that the 'grain' of characterisation within a district-wide assessment is too coarse to map every localised variation in character that will inevitably occur, especially around the edges of settlements.

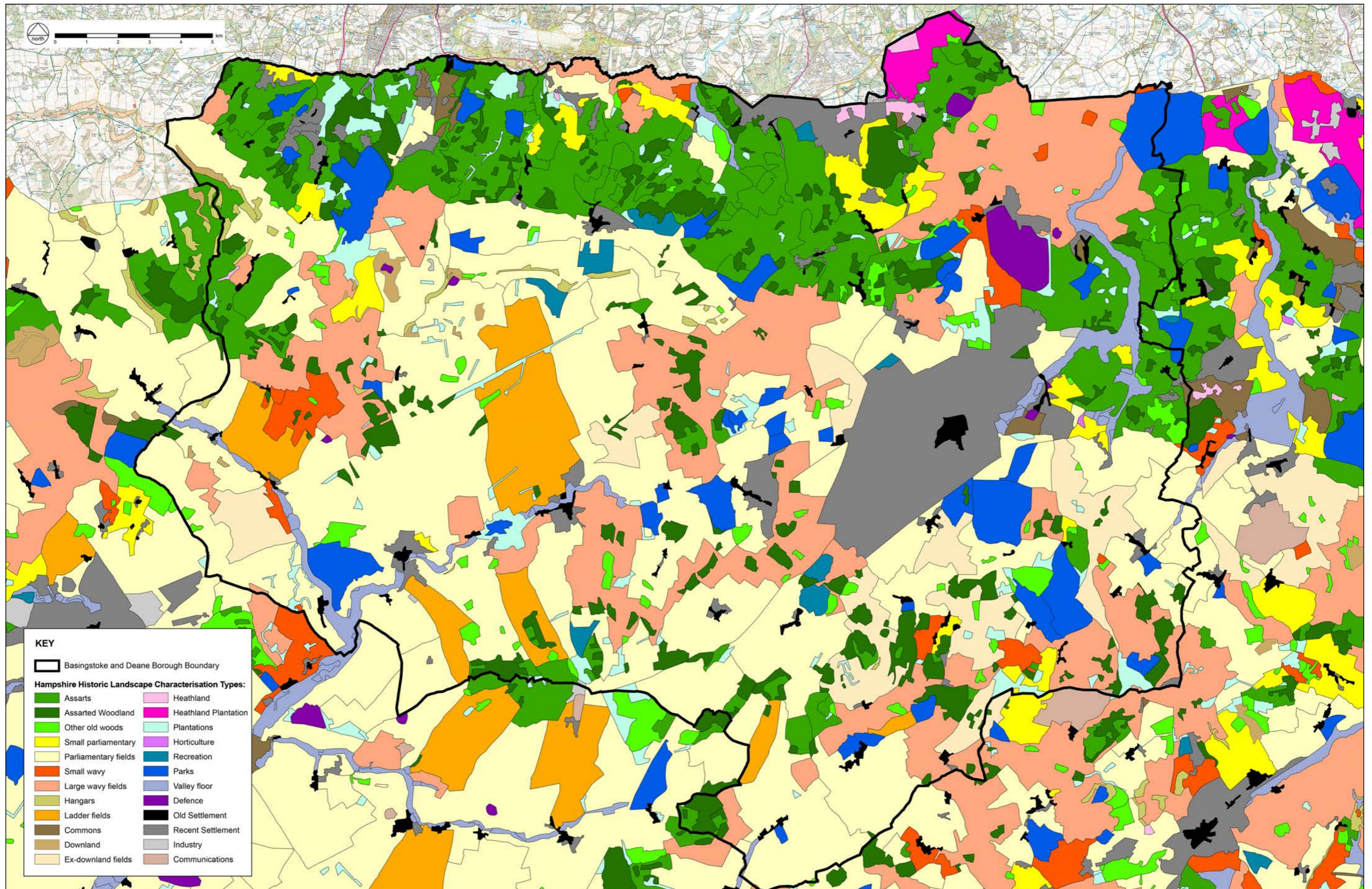


Figure 5 Historic Types

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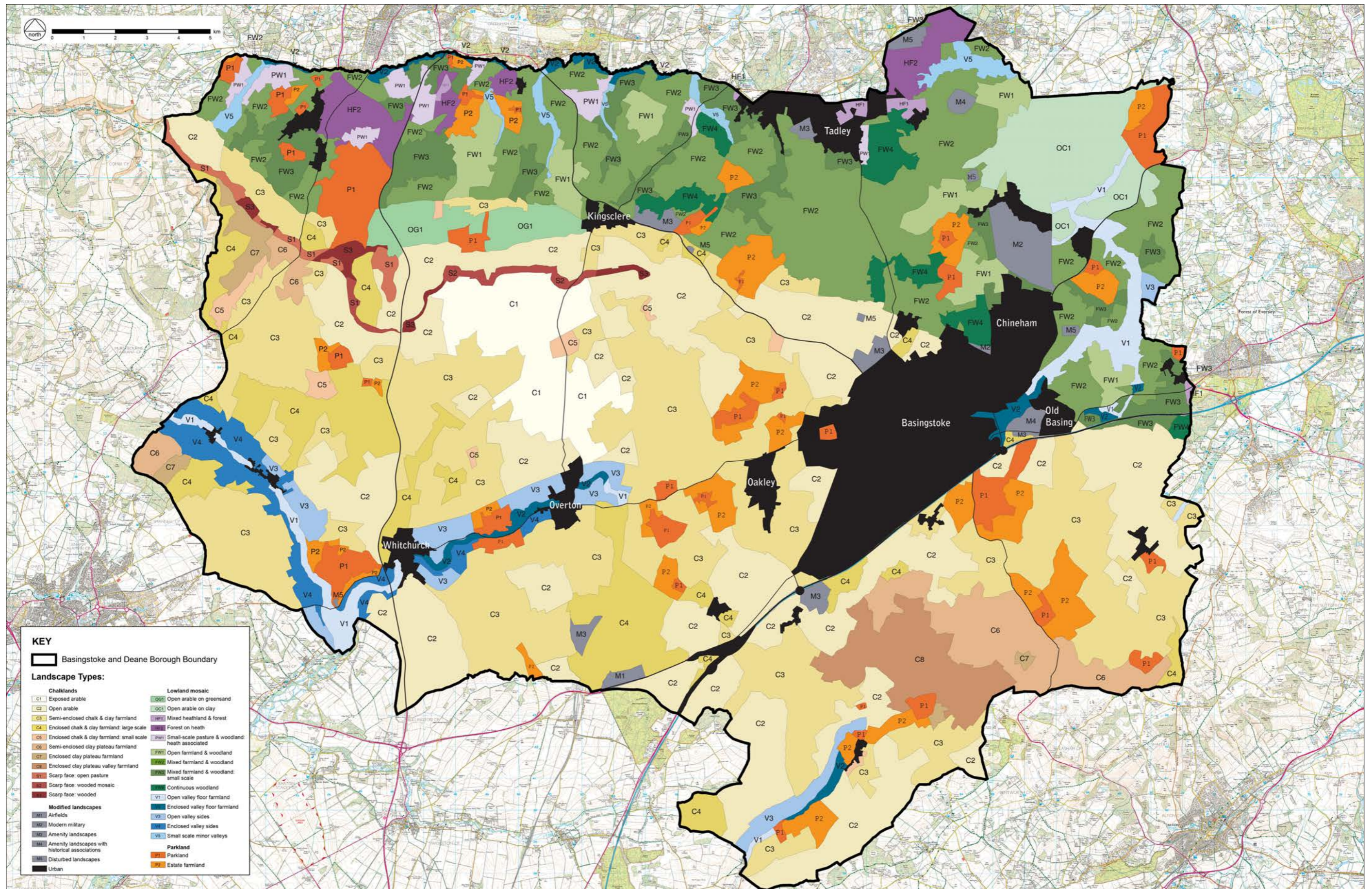


Figure 6 Landscape Types

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### Open arable landscapes

3.6 These are the extensive, large-scale and open arable landscapes that are characteristic of the most intensively farmed chalkland areas. They are widespread across the Borough, particularly in those areas of gently rolling landform where the influence of the chalk geology is not masked by deposits of clay with flints. Like the 1995 Borough-wide assessment, this assessment divides the main open arable landscape type into two sub-types, mainly reflecting differences in the frequency of hedgerows and trees. These are:

- **Exposed arable (C1)** - very large-scale, arable fields with virtually no structure of hedgerows, trees or woodlands; simple landscape with few landscape features; visually exposed with a sense of elevation and extensive panoramic views; blocks or belts of plantation woodland may be present but are generally infrequent; scattered settlement pattern dominated by large farms.
- **Open arable (C2)** - similar characteristics to C1 but distinguished from that type by a greater frequency of hedgerows defining field boundaries. However, these are often low and fragmented with few hedgerow trees, and there is still a low incidence of woodland cover; settlements scattered and infrequent but occurring more often than in the exposed arable type.

### Chalk and clay landscapes

3.7 These landscapes are the most extensive in the Borough and are typical of chalkland areas where there are widespread deposits of clay with flints, particularly on hilltops, creating an undulating or rolling landform. These landscapes share some of the characteristics of the open arable landscapes, but the main difference is the greater incidence of woodland, hedgerows and tree cover. This is closely related to the presence of clay on the ridges and hilltops and its absence in the valleys. Three main subdivisions of this type have been identified in this assessment on the basis of the degree of enclosure created by differences in landform and vegetation cover and the scale of the landscape. These are:

- **Semi-enclosed chalk and clay farmland (C3)** - predominantly large-medium scale arable fields with some areas of pasture; frequent woodland blocks and an intact structure of hedgerows; some visual containment and enclosure by vegetation or landform, but scale of field pattern allows more distant views and creates a semi-enclosed character; denser settlement pattern than found on open arable landscapes with scattered hamlets and villages linked with a moderately dense network of generally winding lanes;
- **Enclosed chalk and clay farmland: large-scale (C4)** - as C3 but with frequent woodland and strong, often tree lined, structure of hedgerows, which creates a definite sense of enclosure and contains more distant views;
- **Enclosed chalk and clay farmland: small-scale (C5)** - similar to C4 but with a noticeably smaller-scale of landscape pattern resulting from smaller field sizes, more diverse topography and a more intimate patchwork of hedgerows, woods and open fields.

### Clay plateau landscapes

3.8 These are landscapes which typically occur on areas of higher ground underlain by extensive, sometimes almost continuous, deposits of clay with flints. The best example is Herriard Plateau in the south-eastern part of the Borough. Other examples are found in the Oakley/Hannington area and in places towards the far western boundary of the Borough. A denser pattern of vegetation distinguishes these areas from the adjacent chalk uplands, with a high overall cover of woodland (typically semi-natural broadleaved) and a strong structure of dense, mixed species hedgerows, with oak as a predominant species.

3.9 The 1995 Borough assessment distinguishes between the clay plateau landscapes on areas of different topography, notably between the flatter areas of continuous clay, and the series of ridges and valleys where erosion has worn away much of the clay. These differences have also been defined in this assessment, together with a distinction in the degree of enclosure within the flatter clay plateau areas:

- **Semi-enclosed clay plateau farmland (C6)** - predominantly large-scale arable fields with some areas of pasture; high frequency of woodland (predominantly semi-natural broadleaved) and a strong structure of hedgerows with distinctive oak trees; some visual containment and enclosure by vegetation or landform, but the scale of field pattern allows more distant views and creates a semi-enclosed character; settlements infrequent and occasional hamlets are widely dispersed and linked via a network of narrow and indirect lanes, lending a sense of remoteness to the area.
- **Enclosed clay plateau farmland (C7)** - as C6 but with a stronger sense of enclosure created by vegetation cover. Enclosed clay plateau valley farmland (C8) - distinguished from C6 and C7 by topography, with a complex system of steep-sided, enclosed valleys and ridges contrasting with flatter plateau landscapes; steep slopes, often wooded, and dense hedgerows and blocks of woodland also occurring on upper slopes; visual enclosure provided by landform and vegetation, creating an intimate land- scape; occasional hamlets and villages with narrow lanes running along valley floor and then upwards onto clay plateau.

### Scarp landscapes

3.10 These are areas of dramatic landform at the edge of the chalk, where erosion has exposed the hard Middle Chalk to form a steep, north facing slope. This towers above the lower-lying landscapes to the north and forms a dramatic edge to the long gentle gradient of the dip slope stretching away to the south. At certain places, such as Beacon Hill, the scarp encircles an area of high ground, producing a domed hill, flanked by characteristic steep-sided coombes. The main distinctions in character brought out by this assessment relate to differences in land cover along the steep scarp face, as follows:

- **Scarp face: open pasture (S1)** - steep, generally north-facing slope predominantly under permanent pasture, with areas of remnant chalk grassland; possibly some encroaching scrub but generally open in character with extensive views out across landscape to the north;
- **Scarp face: wooded mosaic (S2)** - areas of steep scarp face, which have developed a mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland;
- **Scarp face: wooded (S3)** - areas of steep scarp face, which are clothed in dense woodland.

### Open arable on Greensand

3.11 This landscape type occurs in a single location at the foot of the steep chalk scarp to the west of Kingsclere, associated with an exposure of Upper Greensand. It shares many of the characteristics of the surrounding chalk landscapes and almost imperceptibly merges with them, forming a smoothly undulating landform. This is characterised by large-scale, open arable fields, with sparse, closely trimmed hedges and occasionally interrupted by hedgerow trees and blocks of woodland. This is a fairly homogenous area of landscape character which is identified as a single type in this assessment:

- **Open arable on Greensand (OG1)** – strongly undulating landform forming a transitional area between the steep chalk scarp and low-lying clay landscape to the north; predominantly under arable cultivation with large scale fields divided by sparse, trimmed hedgerows; isolated hedgerow trees and occasional woodland blocks; generally open character with distant views; settlements infrequent or scattered and consisting of large farms and associated buildings (including stud farm); roads infrequent and normally follow a gently winding route.

### Open arable on clay

3.12 This landscape type is only found in the Loddon and Lyde Valley character area and is unique to the Borough. It is a flat, low-lying landscape associated with the River Loddon, although there is little discernible valley form. It overlies extensive deposits of London Clay with soils prone to waterlogging. Drainage ditches are frequent features. The landscape is generally open, with low, trimmed hedges containing isolated mature trees, and only a few isolated copses of oak and ash woodland are interspersed across the landscape. This is a fairly homogenous area of landscape character which is identified as a single type in this assessment:

- **Open arable on clay (OC1)** - flat, low-lying landscape; predominantly under arable cultivation with medium to large-scale fields; isolated copses of woodland and low, trimmed hedges with isolated hedgerow trees; frequent drainage ditches; generally open character with medium range views interrupted only by the layering effect of sparse vegetation in flat landscape; outside the main villages settlement pattern very sparse, with larger farms or small clusters of cottages located at the junction of narrow lanes.

### Heathland and forest landscapes

3.13 These landscapes occur exclusively within the north of the Borough on the mosaic of Tertiary clays, sands and gravels with thin acidic soils. They represent areas of unproductive land that have escaped conversion to agricultural use, and comprise a mosaic of acid grassland, heath, encroaching scrub and trees (birch, pine and oak) or continuous forest, mostly comprising coniferous plantations. They represent important remnants of formerly more extensive areas of these habitats and are highly distinctive landscapes within a predominantly farmed area. This assessment sub-divides this type into two, reflecting the difference between more open mosaics of heathland, scrub and woodland, and the dense continuous stands of forest:

- **Mixed heathland and forest (HF1)** - areas of heathland vegetation forming a mosaic with invading scrub, grassland and woodland; semi-natural character; generally visually enclosed but with a mosaic of more open and enclosed areas;
- **Forest on heath (HF2)** - large-scale areas of continuous woodland or forest cover; mainly under commercial coniferous plantations, but with some fringes or stands of broadleaved woodland; potentially some open areas created within the forest through management.

### Pasture and woodland: heath associated landscapes

3.14 This landscape type is also confined to the Tertiary sand, gravel and clay deposits along the northern edge of the Borough on acid soils. It essentially comprises a small scale, intimate mosaic of grazing land and woodland and is very similar to the mixed farmland and woodland types. However, it differs in the predominance of pasture over arable or mixed farmland and, most importantly, in the clear presence of heathland species within verges, woodlands and hedgerows (eg bracken, gorse, oak and birch) which are indicative of more acid soils and a former heath-land character. This type has not been sub-divided in this assessment:

- **Small-scale pasture and woodland: heath associated (PW1)** - mosaic of small-scale irregular, fields, predominantly under pasture, and abundant blocks of woodland (coniferous, mixed or deciduous); frequent hedgerows and hedgerow trees (oak); heathy vegetation characteristics within woodlands, hedgerows, field margins and verges (e.g. oak, birch, gorse, bracken, pine); complex structure and intimate, enclosed character.

### Mixed farmland and woodland landscapes

3.15 These represent the most extensive landscape types across the northern part of the Borough and form a distinctive and highly complex mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland of varying scales and degrees of enclosure. There are no strongly discernible heathy characteristics to the vegetation. Species common in hedgerows and woods tend towards those more typical

of neutral or calcareous soils, such as oak, ash, field maple, dogwood etc. Fields tend to be irregular in shape and bounded by thick hedgerows, mature trees and blocks of woodland, creating a strong sense of enclosure and intimacy. The complex pattern of small-scale valleys, which cross this area from the edge of the chalk to the River Enborne, add to this diversity and enclosure. Some areas have a larger-scale pattern of farmland and are less enclosed by woodland. This assessment sub-divides this type on the following basis:

- **Open farmland and woodland (FW1)** - large-scale, often regularly shaped fields, predominantly under arable; hedgerow structure and woodland blocks are present, but much less frequent or strong than in other examples of this type; generally open character, although longer distance views interrupted by vegetation;
- **Mixed farmland and woodland: large-scale (FW2)** - medium to large-scale mosaic of predominantly arable farmland and woodland; strong hedgerow structure creates moderate sense of enclosure;
- **Mixed farmland and woodland: small-scale (FW3)** - small-scale mosaic of mainly pasture and woodland; strong tree cover and hedgerow structure; enclosed, intimate character; complex landscape created by diverse vegetation pattern and small-scale pattern of valleys;
- **Continuous woodland (FW4)** - large uninterrupted areas of predominantly broadleaved woodland.

### River valley landscapes

3.16 River valley landscapes have been identified where they have a distinctive, sharply defined valley form or riparian character, notably the chalk rivers of the Test and Bourne Rivulet. The Hampshire County assessment and the 1995 Borough assessment tend only to identify the distinctive landscape characteristics of the valley floor. These include flat, low-lying farmland, predominantly under pasture, with characteristic waterside tree species such as willow and alder running alongside the river and other water-courses. The valley floor includes areas of meadow grass-land and other wetland habitats, and watercress beds are fed by braided river channels.

3.17 In the 2001 assessment, a number of additional types were identified to include the prominent, sloping valley sides of the main rivers (particularly on the chalk), and those examples of minor tributary valleys that have a distinctive v-shaped form. Land within river valleys which does not display any special characteristics and merges imperceptibly with the surrounding landscape (eg along the Loddon and Lyde rivers) has been included within the adjacent landscape type. The main distinctions are:

- **Open valley floor farmland (V1)** - flat, low-lying farmland on the valley floor, mainly under grazed pasture or meadow grassland but with occasional arable; distinctive pastoral and riparian character and distinctive species of alder and willow along watercourses; hedgerows, trees and woods comparatively sparse, creating a more open character along the valley floor;
- **Enclosed valley floor farmland (V2)** - similar to V1 but with a greater frequency of trees, hedgerows and woodlands and a smaller-scale pattern of farmland, creating a stronger sense of enclosure;
- **Open valley sides (V3)** - steeply-sloping land which forms an integral part of the valley landscape; fields of varying sizes under arable or pasture with a weak structure of hedgerows and trees; predominantly open character along valley sides although landform blocks views to wider areas;
- **Enclosed valley sides (V4)** - as V3 but with a stronger structure of hedgerows, tree and woodland along the valley sides, creating a stronger sense of enclosure within the valley;
- **Small-scale minor valleys (V5)** - small-scale, distinctive, v-shaped valley landform, without clear definition, between the floodplain and valley sides; tend to be associated with minor tributaries of the main river systems, particularly the River Enborne; generally strong structure of hedgerows, trees and woods, creating strongly enclosed, intimate landscapes.

### **Parkland landscapes**

3.18 These landscapes do not register as distinctive types either within the Hampshire County assessment or the 1995 Borough assessment, even though they occur quite frequently within the Borough, sometimes cover quite extensive areas, and can have very distinctive characteristics that set them apart from surrounding rural landscapes. They are typically associated with large country houses and estates where a designed character has been imposed upon the underlying landscape. They include:

- **Parkland (P1)** - including grand, designed landscapes and smaller areas of parks and gardens associated with large country houses; typical characteristics of grazed pasture with mature parkland trees, avenues, copses and clumps of trees, exotic planting and lakes; typically lie immediately adjacent to large country houses; well-managed landscape character;
- **Estate farmland (P2)** - the wider farmed landscape of large country estates which typically forms a setting for the parkland; with a mature, well-managed and well-wooded character (with frequent copses and game coverts); often surrounded by distinctive estate boundaries (railings or ornamental fencing) and avenues of mature trees.

### **Modified landscapes**

3.19 These are landscapes that lie within a rural context but have developed semi-urban characteristics because of their specific land uses, or proximity to urban influences. They include such disparate landscapes as golf courses, quarries, landfill sites and airfields. The common thread is that their underlying landscape character has been overwhelmed or even destroyed by specific land uses or management regimes, to produce areas of distinctively different character from the areas surrounding them. These landscape types are not defined within the County or 1995 Borough landscape assessment, but are defined now follows:

- **Airfields (M1)** - typically flat, open landscapes with distinctive features of sheds, areas of hard standing, security fencing etc. However, there is only one small example of this type in the Borough and it is relatively low-key and rural in character;
- **Modern military (M2)** - typically enclosed landscape altered for modern military purposes and relatively inaccessible to the general public. There is one large military camp within the Borough, at Bramley;
- **Amenity landscapes (M3)** - these include golf courses and recreational areas which have an intensively managed, suburban character unrelated to their landscape context. They have large areas of managed grassland and distinctive features of bunkers, planting of non-native fast-growing species, club houses/parking etc.
- **Amenity landscape-historic associated (M4)** - these include areas of historic importance which are specifically managed as tourist attractions or recreational areas;
- **Disturbed landscapes (M5)** - these are areas where the landscape has been physically altered by mineral or landfill operations, and has lost its original character.

### **Urban areas and edge characteristics**

3.20 The more extensive areas of continuous built form associated with the main settlements are identified in the County and Borough-wide assessments as 'urban' landscape types. These have been further sub-divided, as part of the key settlement studies, into distinctive townscape types. However, smaller settlements and areas of built form have not been defined separately and, therefore, some landscape types may include areas of built form that do not register within the landscape type description.

3.21 Around the edges of settlements, in particular, some of the landscape types described above exhibit 'fringe' characteristics, which alter their underlying character. They are often the result of the intrusion of adjacent built development, roads or other features (such as power lines), or

poor land management and neglect, such as rank grassland and poorly managed boundaries associated, for example, with horse grazing. Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of all the landscape types across the Borough as a whole.

### **Townscape types**

3.22 Settlements are intimately linked to the landscape of which they are a part. However, within settlements there are distinct townscape types that reflect specific patterns of growth and development. Using a combination of historic mapping, historic research and fieldwork, the principal generic townscape types described below were identified within the Borough.

3.23 The townscape types of the 2001 Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment have been retained within this 2021 update, along with an additional type of '21st Century Housing Estates' to take account of housing development since the 2001 assessment. Each of these types is identified on the updated plans in Section 5.

#### **Historic Urban Core:**

- Continuous built street frontages
- Generally on medieval burgage plots
- Often a central focal point or landmark
- Buildings using local materials
- Variety of built form – some modern redevelopment
- Relatively high density
- Usually minimum setback from street

#### **Historic Areas with Rural Characteristics:**

- Generally more open built form
- Houses often in large plots, often with outbuildings
- Buildings of local materials
- Variety of built form
- Landscape features form a strong element
- Low density

#### **Post Medieval – 19th Century Expansion:**

- Mostly 19th century, especially after the arrival of the railways
- The link between buildings and local materials is usually weaker – brick is the usual material
- Fairly high density

#### **Linear 20th Century Expansion:**

- Ribbon development – access from existing roads
- Often detached houses and bungalows in fairly large plots
- Low density

#### **20th Century Housing Estates:**

- Development not facing onto an already existing road
- Access from culs-de-sac or loop roads
- Low-medium density



#### **21st Century Housing Estates:**

- Development not facing onto an already existing road
- Access from culs-de-sac or loop roads
- Medium-high density

#### **Modern Industrial Development**

- Large-scale buildings
- Modern materials
- Large car parking areas
- Some landscaping

#### **Modern Office and Retail Development, including hospitals (Basingstoke only)**

- Some buildings of high architectural quality
- Large scale buildings – modern materials

#### **Open Space, Woodland and Tree Belts within Settlements**

- Includes landscaped road corridors
- Footpath links
- River valleys and streams through built development
- Allotments
- Recreation and playing fields

## **4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**

- 4.1 The pattern of landscape and historic landscape types provide a detailed impression of the range of character variations within the Borough, and provides the basis for defining landscape character areas. These are tracts of landscape that have a recognisable and coherent identity and sense of place although they may be made up of a number of landscape types. Identification of landscape character areas within the 2001 Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment involved a review of the most appropriate scale and boundaries. This ensured that the historic and ecological characteristics are properly reflected in them. They also take account of public perceptions as determined through stakeholder consultation. It is important to stress that the boundaries between landscape types, or between character areas, are rarely distinct. Instead, they tend to be a best approximation of a gradual but discernible change in character.
- 4.2 The 2001 Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment took into account a number of other assessments in defining and drawing the boundaries of the landscape character areas, including:
- The broad national classification of landscape produced by the Countryside Agency as part of the 'New Map of England' project.
  - The character areas defined at county level and described within 'The Hampshire Landscape - a Strategy for the Future'.
  - The character areas defined in the 1995 Borough-wide assessment.
  - Character area boundaries within adjoining districts.
- 4.3 In total, 20 landscape character areas were defined within the Borough. These represent considerable sub-divisions of the County character areas (4 areas) and also a simplification of the areas identified in the 1995 Borough assessment (35 areas). The resulting areas were considered to represent an appropriate scale, reflecting similarities in underlying geology, landcover, appearance and historic development. Judgements of scenic quality were avoided in favour of a character-based approach in which key characteristics were identified.

4.4 This 2021 update takes into account the current landscape character areas of adjoining local authorities, and Natural England's current National Landscape Character Areas.

4.5 The 2021 update maintains the Character Areas set out in the 2001 assessment, with amendments and additions to their descriptions, and relatively limited amendments to their boundaries. Boundaries have been revised to take into account changes in the landscape, such as increases in development (most notably extensions to settlements) and to better reflect the transition in landscape character between certain character areas. Changes have been made along the boundaries where land cover or topography, is more in keeping with the adjacent character area than the character area within which it was previously located. Typically woodland along a character area boundary has been included in the more heavily wooded character area.

4.6 The 20 Character Areas are as follows. Their revised boundaries are shown on Figure 7, and updated descriptions for each Character Area then follow.

1. Highclere and Burghclere
2. Ecchinswell
3. Wolverton
4. North Sherborne
5. North Silchester
6. Loddon and Lyde Valley
7. The Clere Scarp
8. Great Litchfield Down and Willesley Warren
9. Ashmansworth and Binley Down
10. Litchfield Down
11. Wyke Down
12. Test and Bourne Valley
13. South Test Down
14. Oakley/Steventon Down
15. Hannington Down
16. Basingstoke Down
17. Dummer and Popham Down
18. Tunworth and Upton Grey Down
19. Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valley
20. Candover Valley

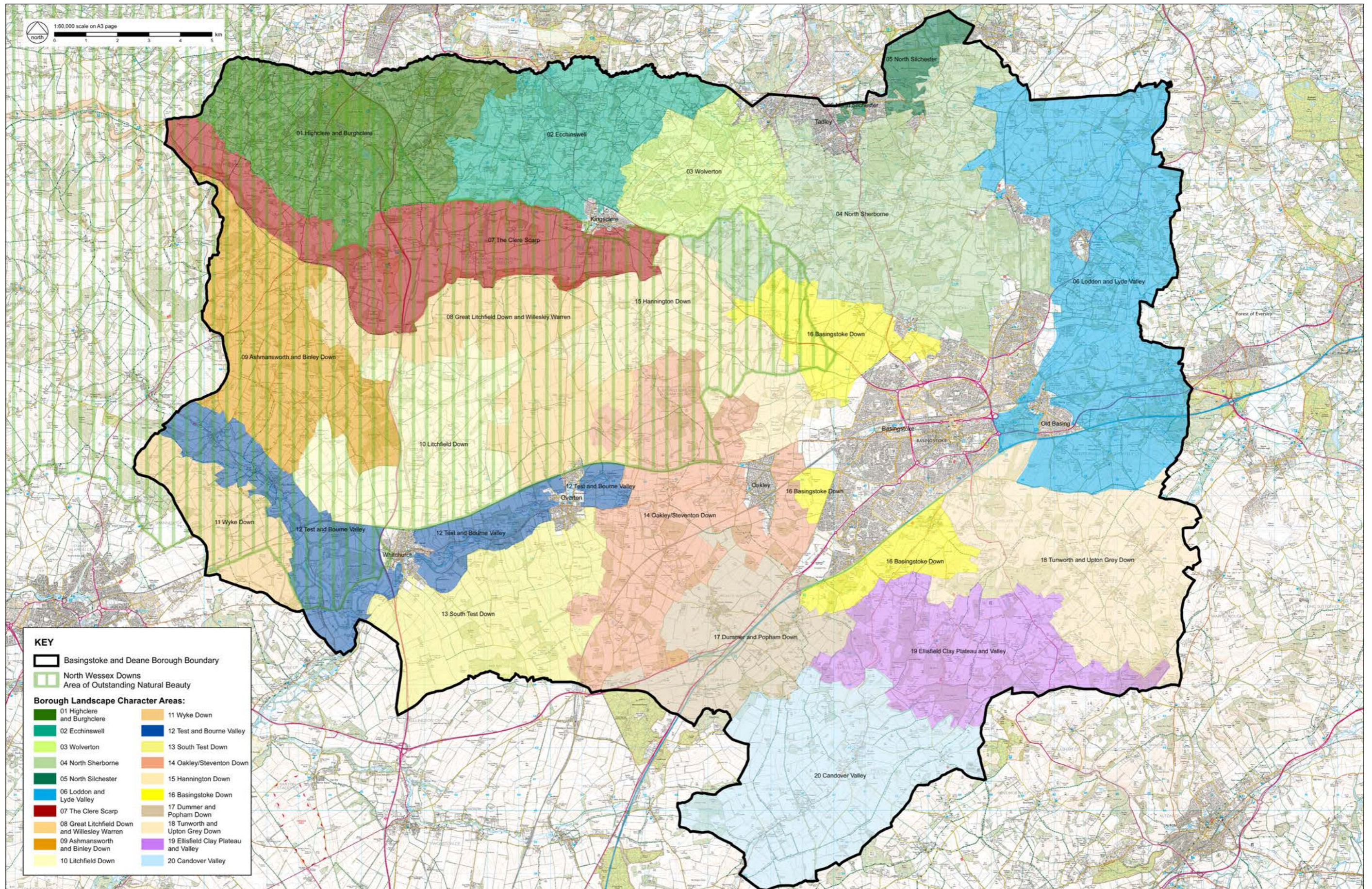
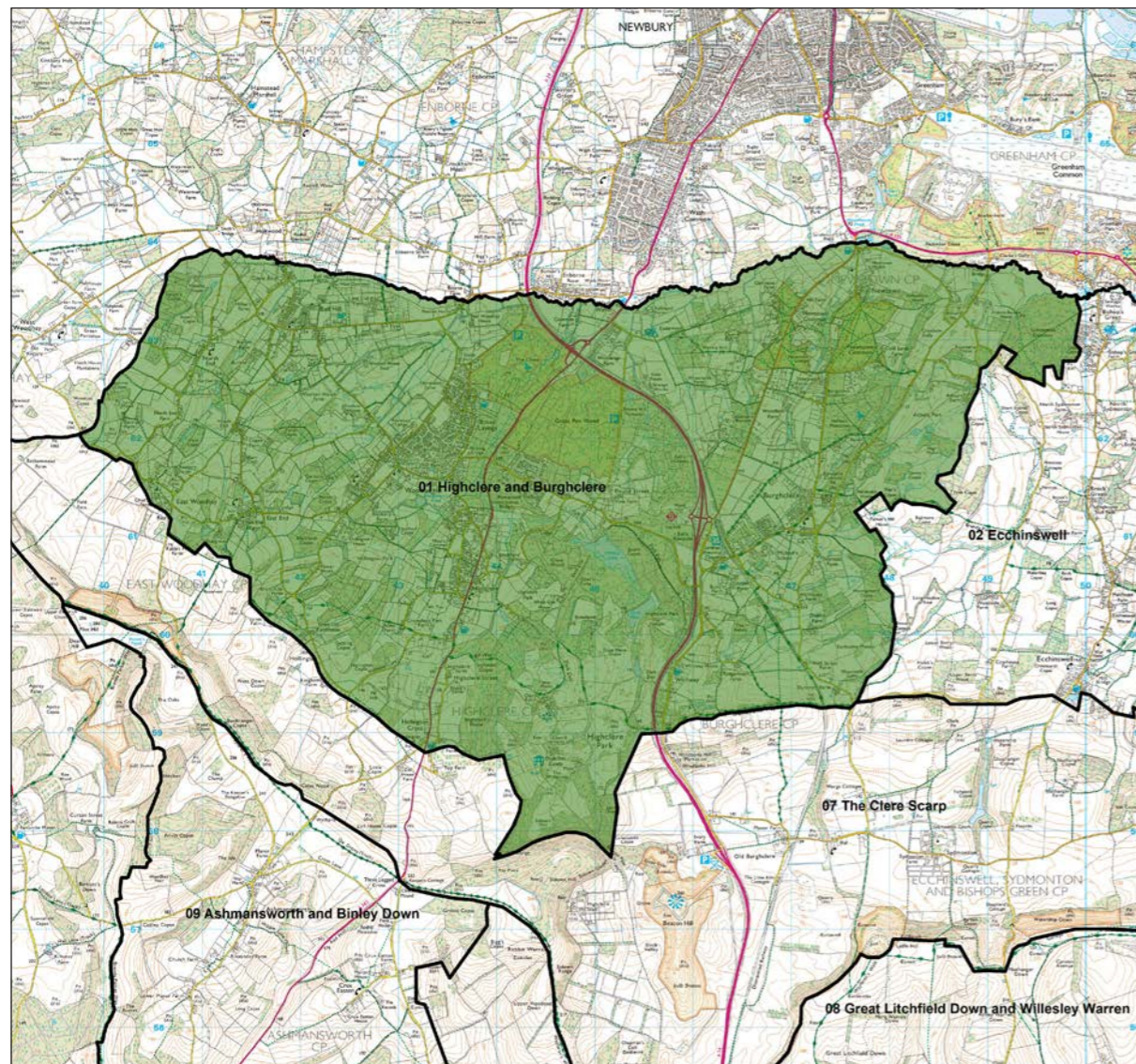


Figure 7 Landscape Character Areas

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## CHARACTER AREA 1: HIGHCLERE AND BURGHCLERE



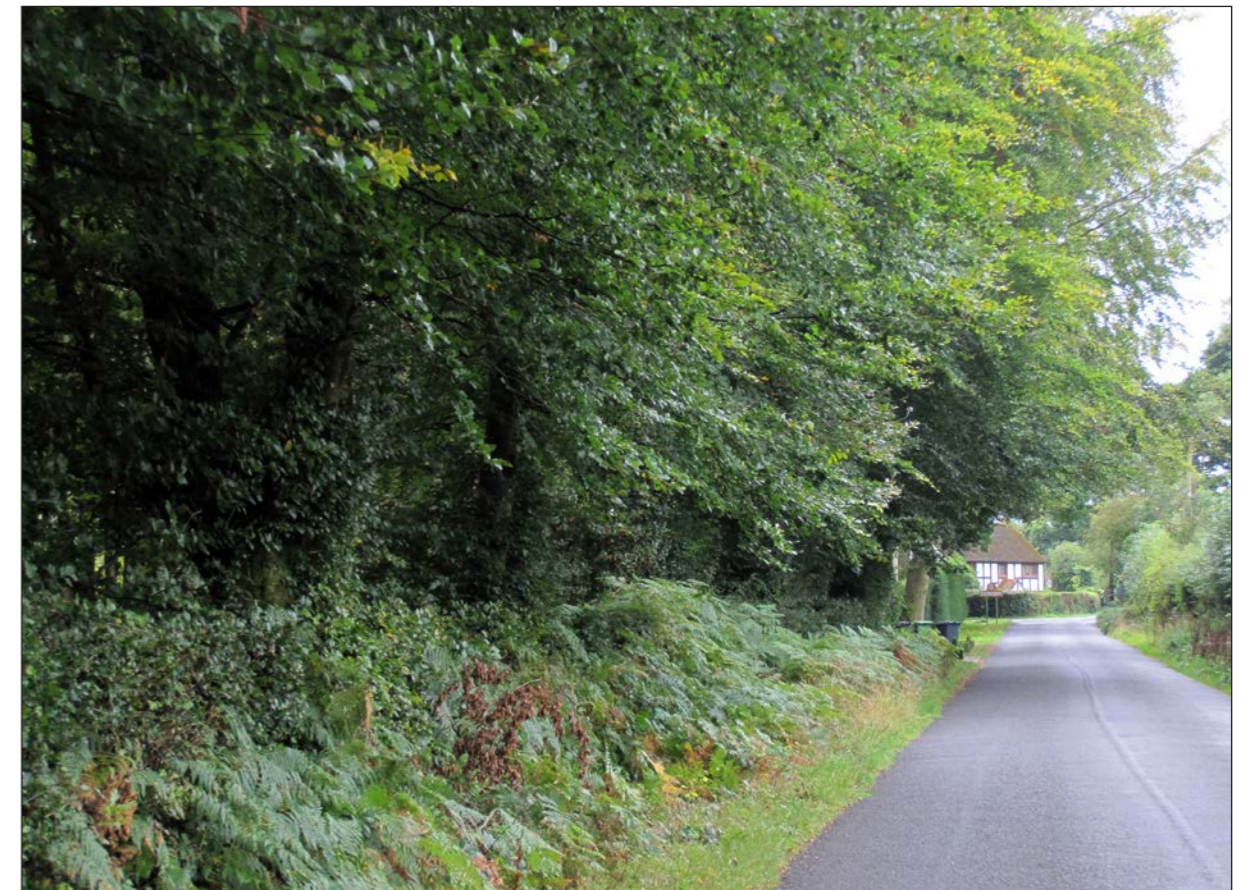
### Location and Boundaries

This gently undulating area of mixed farmland and woodland lies to the extreme north-west of the Borough, bounded to the north and west by the Borough boundary. Its southern boundary is defined by a distinct change in underlying geology and relief, along the north-facing Clere Scarp, between the northern limit of the rolling chalk uplands and the clay lowlands. The eastern boundary marks a general transition to a more open mosaic of farmland and woodland, which characterises the Ecchinswell Character Area. The central and western parts of the Character Area are within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by a mosaic of clay, gravels, sands and loam, which results in subdued relief, contrasting strongly with the chalklands to the south. The area gently slopes away northwards to the River Enborne on the northern boundary of the Character Area. A series of tributary streams, running perpendicular to the river, form shallow valleys, creating a gently undulating but quite complex landform. The acid, unproductive soils over parts of this area are subtly reflected in some small pockets of remnant heath, occasional evidence of heathy species in hedgerows and verges, and a predominance of 'poorer' pasture over arable in these areas. The formerly extensive woodland cover in this part of the Borough was progressively cleared through the process of 'assarting' in the medieval

period to form irregularly shaped fields of arable or grassland. However, the poor, acid soils limited this process, and much of the open land reverted to open heathland vegetation. The Highclere area is part of a region formerly known as 'The Woodlands' and in 1848 was described as 'very heavy strong wet land'. It was characterised by small-scale mixed farming involving cereals and livestock.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is a complex and diverse landscape of varied topography, covered by a medium to small-scale mosaic of woodland, some mixed farmland and many paddocks, creating a relatively enclosed, well-treed and intimate character. Some areas exhibit signs of a former heathy character on poorer quality soils. Other localised variations in character include some extensive areas of coniferous woodland and a number of areas of well-managed parkland, typically with a strong broadleaved woodland component. Despite its variety, the landscape has a coherent and balanced character, and localised variations in character are unified by the enclosure provided by the strong structure of woodland, hedgerows and trees. Parts of the area have become rather urbanised in character, partly due to the numerous horse paddocks and stud farms, but also due to recent residential development around some of the small villages, such as Highclere and Woolton Hill. There are now many residential properties scattered throughout the area, together with individual farmsteads, and the local population has increased. The A34 and A343 facilitate north-south movement through the area, although a fairly dense network of narrow lanes still connects many of the villages, hamlets, and individual properties.

### Highclere and Burghclere Key Characteristics

- Subtle but complex landform, steep in places but generally gently undulating and falling towards the River Enborne in the north, dissected by a network of minor tributary valleys;
- Small-scale mosaic of woodland, some mixed farmland and numerous paddocks, giving an enclosed, intimate character in parts;
- Area west of the A34 lies within the North Wessex Downs 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB) and generally has a quiet, rural character away from larger residential areas, apart from some noise and visual intrusion from the A34 and A343 which cross north-south through the centre of the Character Area;
- Generally medium to small-scale fields, with a predominance of pasture, enclosed within an established assarted woodland and intact hedgerow structure with a high proportion of hedgerow trees;
- High percentage of woodland cover, particularly close to Penwood and Highclere, between the A34 and A343, where extensive coniferous plantation encloses and contains views. Large-scale broadleaf woodland within Highclere Park contributes to a strongly wooded character;
- Examples of scarce and fragile heathland and forest landscapes (e.g. Newtown and Burghclere commons), with evidence of heathy vegetation characteristics in many areas. Also remnants of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland;
- High proportion of well-managed parkland of varying scales, notably the Grade 4 I listed medieval deer park of Highclere Park, plus other parklands associated with smaller private estates and stud farms, such as Hollington Park near Woolton Hill, and Adbury Park near Newtown;
- Low intervisibility across the area, with vegetation and the low-lying nature of the landscape containing views, but there are some distinctive views south towards the scarp, such as from around East Woodhay;
- Numerous scattered small villages, and hamlets, most notably including North End, East End and Ball Hill to the west, and Newtown and Burghclere to the east, and frequent farmsteads across the Character Area. There is also a proliferation of low density residential properties, mainly located along an extensive network of narrow lanes, within the western and eastern portions of the area.
- Recent residential development, together with paddocks and stud farms, and a relatively high local population, lend a rather urbanised character;
- There is a dense network of public rights of way, including parts of the Brenda Parker Way Long Distance Path, within the western and eastern portions of the Character Area, and significant areas of Open Access land within The Chase and Great Pen Wood to the north. However, areas within the centre of the Character Area, including around Highclere Park, have more limited public access;
- Certain settlements of probable medieval origin, eg East Woodhay and Highclere, with the site of a former medieval town marked by an ancient monument at Newtown.

### Key Issues

- Decline in extent of heathland vegetation through inappropriate management (scrub invasion), or conversion to forestry and agriculture, and the need for continued/extended management of heathland commons;
- Poor species and structural diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands including hazel coppice woods;
- Continuity of traditional management of pasture woodlands;
- Loss of broadleaf woodlands;
- Management and retention of hedgerows (including tree saplings) and field patterns of historic significance;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to rivers, streams and other sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Management of floodplain habitats to sustain or improve biodiversity levels;
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved neutral/acidic grasslands to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Some adverse impacts of horse grazing (eg rank grassland with weeds, poorly-managed boundaries or inappropriate styles of fencing etc.);
- Reduction in biodiversity levels through agricultural practices;
- Maintenance of uninterrupted views to the scarp;
- Suburbanising influence of built development and roads in many parts of the landscape, including suburban styles of fencing, signage, lighting and planting, as well as noise from main roads, in particular the A34.

## GUIDANCE

### Highclere and Burghclere Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Highclere and Burghclere Character Area is to conserve the overall rural pattern of farmland and woodland with small scale settlement, whilst limiting increases in urbanisation through incongruous development. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and the variety of woodland. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, the siting of new development, and intrusion from certain types of development.

### Landscape Guidelines

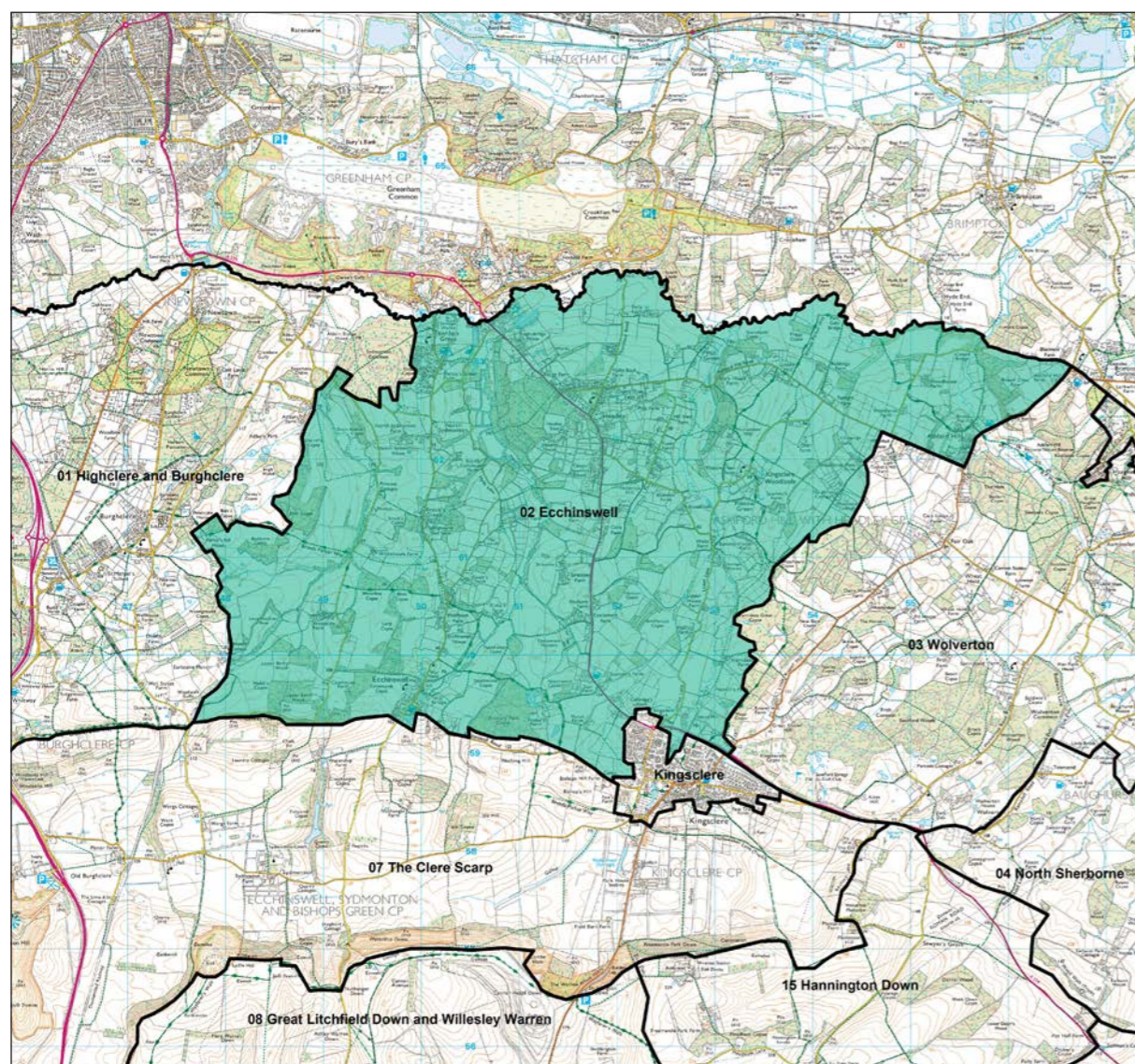
#### Land Management

- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as heathland associated with Newtown and Burghclere commons, and the woodlands and hedgerows across the character area;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assorted field patterns and woodlands which cover the majority of the area, and encourage conservation of the those elements;
- Conserve, enhance and restore broadleaf woodlands generally across the Character Area through effective long term management and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Encourage sensitive management of conifer plantations for their species and wildlife value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows throughout the Character Area;
- Encourage improved management of road verges and roadside hedgebanks, along the many lanes, particularly within the eastern and western portions of the Character Area;
- Ensure that infrastructure which supports leisure activities (including car parking, signage, seating and dog bins) is sensitivity designed and placed to conserve the rural character of the area, such as at The Chase and Great Pen Wood;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible, particularly next to sensitive habitats such as rivers and streams, including tributaries of the River Enborne;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence, in particular Highclere Park;
- Encourage appropriate siting and management of horse paddocks, for instance in utilising existing hedges or planting new native hedges as boundary treatments rather than fencing new areas of land. Limit effect of permanent horse exercise areas and siting of exercise equipment such as treadmills, pens, and jumps where this is visually intrusive on the landscape;

#### Built Development

- New development should be associated with existing settlement within the Character Area, for example at Highclere, Burghclere and Woolton Hill, where appropriate.
- Retain the rural character of the area, including avoiding the spread of low density/ribbon development along lanes such as those within the vicinity of Ball Hill and Newtown, and conserve historic settlements, such as North End and East End, as well as more isolated farmsteads such as Ridgemoor Farm (to the south-east of the A34 Tot Hill services);
- Siting of any new development should take into account views within the AONB and from the scarp to the south.
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Retain natural buffers and boundaries to settlements where possible, using existing landscape features and characteristics, in particular tree cover;
- Retain woodland that screens development and consider opportunities for further tree planting sympathetic to the area, in order to help integrate development into the rural area;
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that potential road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, such as roads within Highclere, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

## CHARACTER AREA 2: ECCHINSWELL



### Location and Boundaries

This Character Area lies in the north of the Borough, bounded to the north by the Borough boundary and the River Enborne. The southern boundary is defined by the distinct change in geology and relief of the chalklands and Upper Greensand to the south. The western boundary marks a transition to the more enclosed farmland and woodland of the Highclere and Burghclere Character Area. The eastern boundary identifies a change to the more wooded Wolverton Character Area. The Character Area is outside the North Wessex Downs AONB, but abuts the AONB's northern edge to the south.

### Formative Influences

The underlying geology is predominantly heavy London Clay, which results in the generally low-lying relief and heavy soils of this area. However, localised areas of Bagshot Beds (sand) and Higher Level Terrace Deposits result in some areas of higher ground and drier, acidic soils. Drift deposits of alluvium and low level terrace deposits have been laid down where the river Enborne and its tributaries cut through the landscape. The numerous springs which emerge between the permeable chalklands to the south and the impermeable clay form north-south tributary streams which flow into the River Enborne. These form minor valleys and a gently undulating but quite complex landform. As in the Highclere Character Area, the once widespread woodland cover in Ecchinswell was gradually cleared in medieval



times to form assarts. It was also part of 'The Woodlands' region, and was characterised by small-scale mixed farming involving cereals and livestock.

### Overall Landscape Character

This area is characterised by a medium-scale mosaic of mixed farmland and relatively small, but numerous, copses and areas of woodland. These small, irregular-shaped woodlands are predominantly broadleaved, although larger, less-frequent areas of mixed conifer and broadleaf are evident to the west of Headley. Fields are under a mix of pasture and arable, and bounded by a strong structure of hedgerows and trees. Added diversity is created by areas of more open farmland on higher ground and smaller, more enclosed fields, under pasture, within the minor stream valleys. As in the Highclere and Burghclere Character Area, the landform is gently undulating and the landscape has an intimate, relatively secluded character. Numerous small villages, hamlets and individual farmsteads and properties are scattered throughout the area accessed through a fairly dense network of narrow lanes, often enclosed within high hedgerows. Some parts in the west and south-west have a feeling of remoteness and, overall, the Character Area has retained a rural character away from the A339 and fringes of Kingsclere and Headley.

### Ecchinswell Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform created by streams and gullies which flow northwards from the foot of the Clere Scarp and into the River Enborne, forming a series of minor north-south valleys and a complex landform across the Character Area;
- Diverse and complex pattern of small to medium-scale mixed farmland, occasional well-managed parkland, such as at North Sydmonton, numerous, relatively small, irregular-shaped copses and woodland areas, and a generally intact hedgerow and tree structure;
- Generally well-wooded, unspoilt, rural character giving distinctive sense of place, the tree cover creating enclosure and intimacy, and reducing the impact of occasional roads or buildings, except near the A339 which crosses through the middle of the Character Area. A line of pylons crosses through the eastern portion of the Character Area;
- Medium-sized fields under arable and pasture reflecting assarted land and, in the northern half, 18th –19th century parliamentary enclosure (possibly including post-parliamentary enclosures of downland or woodland) and the large wavy-edged fields resulting from 17th - 18th century informal enclosure;
- Pockets of more open farmland, characterised by larger assarted arable fields, fewer woodland blocks and hedgerows at Cottismore Farm (located off the A339 between Headley and Kingsclere) and Woodside Farm (located to the north-west of Ecchinswell), and large wavy fields at Old Farm (located between Headley and Ashford Hill);
- Smaller fields predominantly under pasture within the stream valleys;
- Numerous scattered remnants of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland, of ecological and historic landscape value, together with small remnants of unimproved neutral grassland. Larger areas of ancient woodland include Forbury Park Copse to the south, and Westlands Copse to the north;
- Generally low intervisibility through the area, with views contained by frequent hedgerows and woodland blocks. The more open farmland and woodland areas have slightly longer views, and there are some distinctive views south towards the scarp, such as from Union Lane to the north of Kingsclere, but still generally contained within the woodland framework;
- Public rights of way, including parts of the Brenda Parker Way Long Distance Path, provide a high degree of pedestrian access to most parts of the Character, although there is no Open Access land;
- Network of narrow roads links scattered small villages and hamlets, such as Ecchinswell, Bishop's Green, Headley, Goose Hill and Ashford Hill, along with farmsteads and individual dwellings, whilst the more direct A339 disturbs the generally quiet and secluded nature of the landscape.

### Key Issues

- Past loss of broadleaf woodland;
- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands including hazel coppice woods;
- Poor species and structural diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Continuity of traditional management of pasture woodlands;
- Removal of hedgerows (including tree saplings) and weakening of landscape structure in more open farmland areas;
- The unity of the hedgerow network, and retention and management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance;
- Management of road verges and hedgerows, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to rivers, streams and other sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved neutral/acidic grasslands to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Some adverse impacts of horse grazing (e.g. rank grassland with weeds, poorly-managed boundaries or inappropriate styles of fencing etc.);
- Reduction in biodiversity levels through intensive agricultural practices;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Kingsclere, encroaching into the Character Area.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Ecchinswell Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Ecchinswell Character Area is to conserve the overall rural mosaic of farmland and woodland with small scale settlement, whilst limiting increases in urbanisation through incongruous development. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and the variety of woodland. Areas which form part of the setting to the AONB to the south should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

#### ***Land Management***

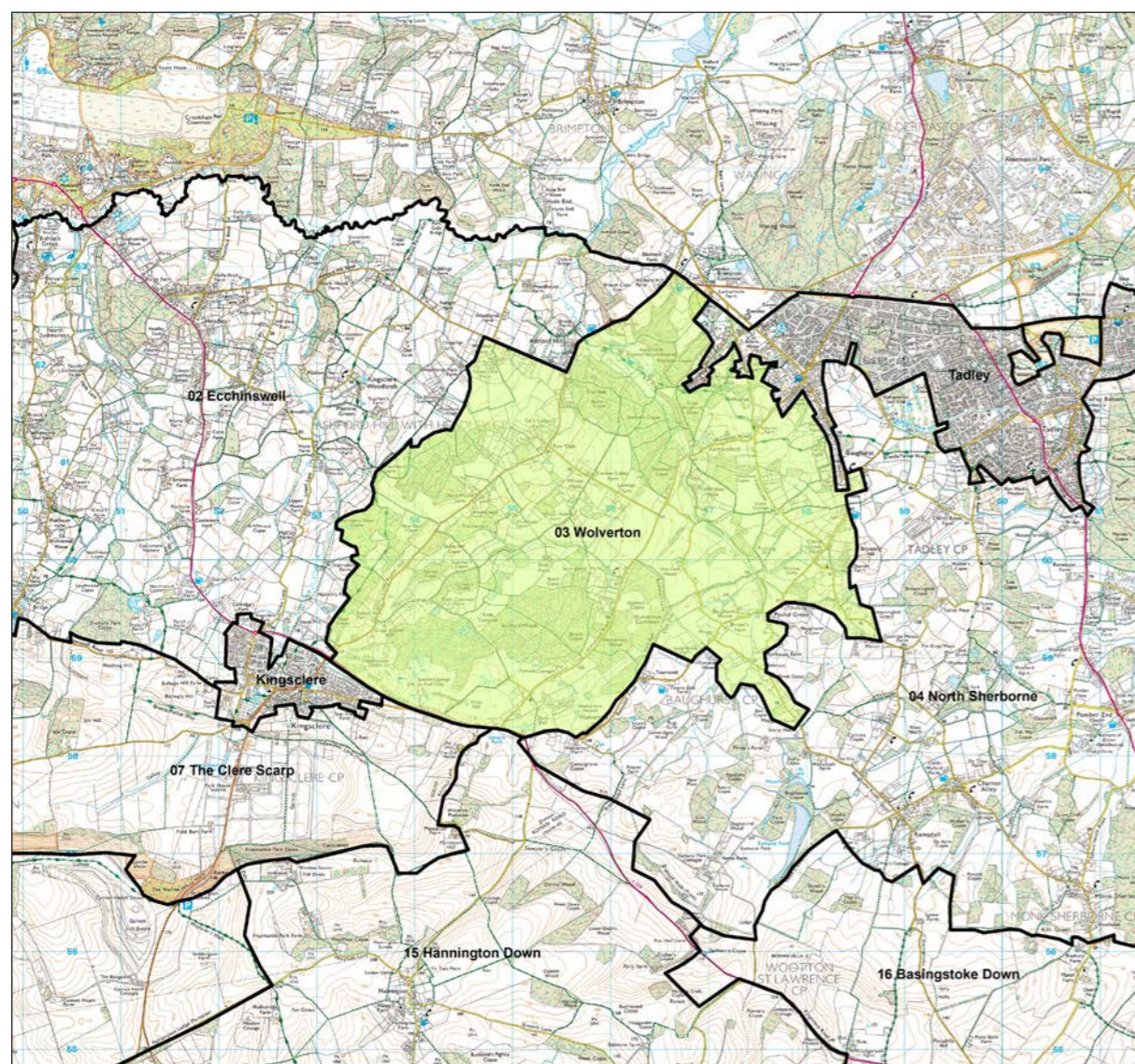
- Encourage responsible management of watercourses which flow north through the Character Area towards the River Enborne, and adjacent meadows and damp woodland, including enhancements for wildlife;
- Conserve, enhance and restore woodlands across the Character Area, through effective long term management and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their varied character and their ecological value.
- Encourage sensitive management of plantations for their species and wildlife value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and in particular within more open farmland areas, such as to the north-east of Headley, north-east of Plastow Green, and to the north-west of Kingsclere;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible, particularly next to sensitive habitats such as the streams which flow north into the River Enborne;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assarted field patterns and woodlands which cover the central and southern areas, and encourage conservation of the those elements;
- Encourage improved management of road verges and roadside hedgebanks along the network of narrow roads throughout the Character Area;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows, woodlands, hazel coppice and grasslands;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

#### ***Built Development***

- New development should be associated with existing settlement within the Character Area, for example at Ashford Hill, where appropriate.
- Retain the rural character along lanes, such as those within the vicinity of Headley, and conserve existing historic settlements, such as Ecchinswell, as well as more isolated farmsteads such as Hyde Farm (located between Ecchinswell and Headly);
- Avoid development which reduces existing views of the scarp, including views from the north of Kingsclere;
- Encourage any new built development to respond appropriately to the existing urban edge of Kingsclere, with retention of natural buffers to settlement where possible, including existing hedgerows and trees along boundaries to the north and east of the village, and promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Retain woodland that screens development and consider opportunities for further tree planting sympathetic to the landscape character of the area;
- Avoid visual intrusion as far as possible from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that potential road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, such as unlit roads within Headley, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.



### CHARACTER AREA 3: WOLVERTON



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#### Location and Boundaries

This Character Area lies in the north of the Borough, lying between the more open Character Areas of Ecchinswell to the west and North Sherborne to the east. The northern boundary is marked by the Borough boundary and the settlement of Baughurst. The southern boundary marks the distinct change in geology between the clay/bagshot beds of the lowland mosaic and the chalk geology to the south. The Character Area abuts the northern edge of the Wessex Downs AONB to the south, and overlaps marginally into the AONB at the south-east corner of the Character Area.

#### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by clay and permeable sands and gravel, forming a subdued, low-lying landform which strongly contrasts with the elevated chalkland to the south. Minor streams, which have laid down alluvium and gravel deposits, dissect the surrounding clays and sands, giving rise to the characteristic gently undulating landform. Formation of the present landscape probably began as long ago as the early prehistoric period (Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was beginning to be cleared for agriculture and grazing. In the medieval period much of this area was part of the Royal Forest of Pamber, used for hunting and the managed production of timber. During the medieval and post-medieval periods, patches of this woodland were cleared for agriculture and

settlement, but some still survive. More areas were cleared for agriculture, grazing and settlement, sometimes through encroachment, and sometimes by agreement or formal enclosure during the 17th-19th centuries. Occupation was established within the area by the medieval period with 'Wolveyton' among the settlements mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086.



#### Overall Landscape Character

This area is characterised by a medium to small-scale mixed farmland and woodland mosaic. The area has a high proportion of woodland cover, including large, ancient semi-natural woodland blocks and numerous irregular broadleaf copses, creating a relatively enclosed and textured landscape. Fields are under a mix of pasture and arable and bounded by a strong structure of hedgerows and trees. Hamlets and individual properties are dispersed throughout the area linked together by a network of narrow, winding lanes, often enclosed within high hedgerows/hedgebanks. The landscape generally retains a rural, quiet character, although the urban influences of Tadley and Baughurst are evident along the north-eastern edge of the area.

### **Wolverton Key Characteristics**

- Gently undulating landform draining north-eastwards, from downland to the south, towards the River Enborne to the north, and crossed by a network of minor tributary valleys and gullies;
- Complex and diverse pattern of small to medium-scale mixed farmland and woodland;
- Typically rural and quiet, but more urbanised character along its north-eastern edge near Tadley and Baughurst;
- Generally medium to small-scale pasture and arable fields, predominantly assarts with a small area of parliamentary fields south-east of the village of Ashford Hill;
- High proportion of woodland cover, including large assarted woodland blocks, other old woods, and numerous small, predominantly broadleaf copses, giving a distinctive wooded and semi-enclosed/enclosed character. Extensive areas of ancient woodland, including Sandford Woods, towards the south;
- Examples of scarce habitat types including remnant areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and the Ashford Hills Wood SSSI, a woodland and unimproved meadow complex with remarkable habitat quality supporting a number of rare and threatened species. Also small area of remnant dry heath to the west of Tadley;
- Parkland at Wolverton lending a more formal, managed element to the landscape;
- Low lying nature of the landscape, and a high proportion of vegetation cover, limits intervisibility across the area;
- Apart from the larger settlement of Baughurst to the north, the settlement pattern consists of hamlets, such as Wheat Hold towards the centre of the area, isolated farmsteads and individual properties reached along winding lanes, which in turn connect to Wolverton Road and Little Knowl Hill which cross the Character Area;
- There is a dense network of Public Rights of Way, including parts of the Brenda Parker Way Long Distance Path, across the most of the Character Area, providing a keen sense of isolation within the woodland;
- Important geological exposures along the Kingsclere Stream Section (SSSI).

### **Key Issues**

- Poor species and structural diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands, including hazel coppice woods;
- Some loss of broadleaf woodland;
- The identification and management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance;
- Management of road verges and hedgerows, with damage from scrub encroachment and road improvements;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips adjacent to streams and sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Management of unimproved neutral grassland and neutral/acidic unimproved/semi-improved grassland, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Some adverse impacts of horse grazing (e.g rank grassland with weeds, poorly managed boundaries, or inappropriate styles of fencing etc.);
- Reduction in biodiversity levels through agricultural practices;
- Suburbanising influence of built development and roads associated with Tadley/Baughurst, including suburban styles of fencing, signage, lighting and planting;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to existing urban edges, such as Tadley and Kingsclere, encroaching into the Character Area.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Wolverton Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Wolverton Character Area is to maintain the secluded peaceful nature of the landscape, primarily by enhancing and conserving the extensive woodland, and limiting inappropriate urbanisation. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the woodland, hedgerows and watercourses. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting to the south should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

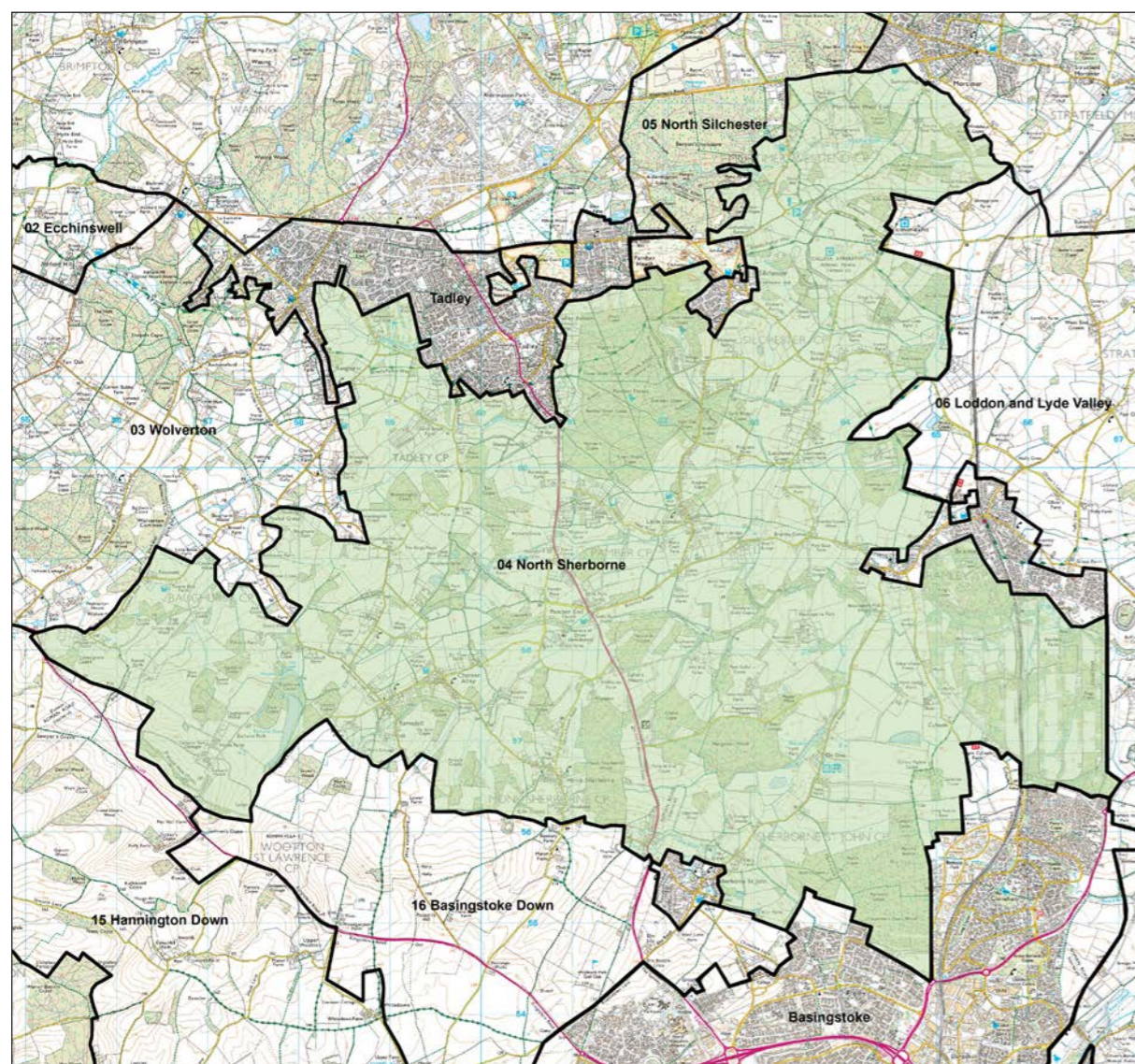
#### ***Land Management***

- Conserve, enhance and restore woodland, particularly ancient woodland such as Ashford Hills Wood, Wolverton Wood, Ailey Lands Copse, Clinkers Copse, as well as other smaller areas of broadleaf woodland throughout the Character Area, through effective long term management and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Protect, and enhance where possible, remnant dry heath to the west of Little Aldershot Lane, west of Tadley, and unimproved meadow to the east of Ashford Hill;
- Encourage sensitive management of plantations for their species and wildlife value;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional techniques such as coppicing, where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features, in particular the variety of woodland across the Character Area;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows, including, but not limited to, those which contribute to field patterns of historical significance, such as the fields originating from parliamentary enclosure to the south of Ashford Hill;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible, particularly next to sensitive habitats such as rivers and streams, including Silchester Brook and Bow Brook;
- Encourage improved management of road verges and roadside hedgebanks along Wolverton Road, Little Knowl Hill and connecting winding lanes;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assorted field patterns and woodlands which occupy the majority of the Character Area, and encourage conservation of the those elements;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material;

#### ***Built Development***

- New development should be associated with existing settlement, for example the edges of Ashford Hill and Tadley, where appropriate.
- Retain the rural character along lanes, such as along Wolverton Road, and conserve existing historic settlements, such as Ramsdell, Monk Sherborn and Three Ashes, as well as more isolated farmsteads;
- Encourage new built development to respond appropriately to existing urban edges, such as the edges of Tadley and Kingsclere, with retention of natural buffers and boundaries where possible, including in particular the adjacent woodland, and promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Avoid visual intrusion from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Retain woodland that screens development and consider opportunities for further tree planting sympathetic to the area, in order to help integrate development into the rural area;
- Conserve areas of undisturbed wooded skyline;
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character, including at the edge of Tadley. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline;

## CHARACTER AREA 4: NORTH SHERBORNE



### Location and Boundaries

This Character Area lies in the north of the Borough and stretches from the more wooded Wolverton Character Area to the west, to the Loddon and Lyde valley system to the east. The northern boundary is marked by the settlement of Tadley, the enclosed plantation and heathland landscape of the North Silchester Character Area, and the Borough boundary. Its southern boundary is defined by the distinct change in geology between the clay/Bagshot Beds of the lowland mosaic and the chalkland to the south.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by heavy clay, permeable sands and gravels, forming a subdued, low-lying landform which strongly contrasts with the elevated chalklands to the south. Minor streams have dissected the underlying geology, resulting in a gently undulating topography. Much of this area was formerly part of the Royal Forest of Pamber. In medieval times, the process of 'assarting' progressively cleared the once large-scale woodland cover. Of particular archaeological importance is the remarkable preserved Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) and its associated earthworks, which were built on an existing Iron Age settlement. Occupation was established elsewhere within the area by the medieval period. For example Ewhurst, Sherborne St John and Monk Sherborne are amongst settlements mentioned in Domesday survey of 1086.



### Overall Landscape Character

In common with much of the lowland landscape to the north of the Borough, this area is a patchwork of mixed farmland and woodland, which forms the setting for a diversity of other landscapes including managed parkland, minor valleys, and more extensive areas of woodland. Despite its diversity, the overall effect is a unified and balanced landscape, with the low-lying and gently undulating landform linking the various landscape types into one distinct Character Area. A small southern part of the area, between Wolverton and Ramsdell, lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. In many areas the landscape has retained a quiet, rural character, with a network of narrow, winding roads linking the dispersed villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads. The quietness of the area is disrupted, however, in those areas along the A340 corridor, and the rural character affected near the larger settlements of Tadley, Bramley and Chineham.

### North Sherborne Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating, subtle landform dissected by a network of minor tributary valleys;
- Pattern of predominantly arable farmland and improved grassland with occasional well-managed parkland, and a low density of small scale scattered settlement, enclosed within an established woodland and hedgerow structure with many hedgerow trees;
- South-west corner lies within North Wessex Downs AONB, and overall landscape typically has a rural character, except near Tadley and Mortimer to the north and Basingstoke/Chineham to the southeast. Generally quiet, apart from areas along the busy A340. Occasional detracting influence from pylons and overhead wires, including within the AONB;
- Predominantly assarted and small parliamentary fields, giving way to large wavy, small wavy and parliamentary fields to the east;
- Two pockets of more open arable farmland towards the south-east, characterised by parliamentary fields with infrequent woodland cover and low, well-cut hedgerows, notably between The Vyne and North Chineham and to the north-west of Bramley;
- Variety of woodland, including small predominantly broadleaf copses and larger woodland such as Morgaston Wood and Carpenters Down Wood. Also Pamber Forest, which has placed a crucial role in the historical development of the area;
- Significant areas of ancient woodland, including Pamber Forest to the north, and Monk Sherborne Wood to the south;
- Remnant areas of scarce habitat types including ancient semi-natural woodland, heathland (notably part of the Pamber Forest and Silchester Common SSSI), and neutral/acidic unimproved grassland. The latter includes Ron Wards Meadow with Tadley Pastures SSSI, one of Hampshire's finest surviving hay meadow/pasture complexes;
- Three distinctive areas of parkland, 'The Vyne' (Grade II), Beaurepaire Park and Ewhurst Park, contributing a well-managed element to the landscape;
- Moderate intervisibility across the area, with vegetation and low-lying nature of the landscape containing distant views;
- A settlement pattern dominated by small villages, such as Charter Alley and Little London, hamlets, isolated farmsteads and individual properties distributed throughout the rural landscape, reached through a network of narrow, winding roads;
- Larger settlements adjoin the Character Area, including Tadley to the north, and the Chineham to the south-east. Chineham has seen considerable westwards expansion in recent years, necessitating realignment of the previous Character Area boundary to follow the new settlement edge, related to the existing landscape structure of intact hedgerows which define the new settlement edge;
- A network of public rights of way crosses the majority of the area, although some areas have limited public access, such as to the south-west within the AONB, and areas to the south-east, including farmland and the former Bramley Ordnance Depot;
- The Reading to Basingstoke railway line crosses through the eastern end of the Character Area, with the nearest station at Bramley;
- There are two large solar farms towards the centre of the Character Area, at Berry Court and Hill End, appearing as incongruous features, albeit low lying, where visible in the surrounding landscape;
- Remarkably preserved Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) and its associated earthworks, together with many other Scheduled Ancient Monuments, reinforcing the historic richness of the landscape.

### Key Issues

- Poor species and structure diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Under-management of the numerous ancient semi-natural woodlands, including hazel coppice woods;
- Loss of broadleaf woodlands;
- Relatively weak landscape structure, primarily within more open arable landscapes, and resulting need to encourage hedgerow planting;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to rivers, streams and other sensitive habitats;
- Loss of heath associated vegetation through inappropriate management and more intensive agricultural use;
- Management of unimproved neutral grassland and areas of neutral/acidic unimproved/semi-improved grassland, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Some adverse impacts of horse grazing (e.g. rank grassland with weeds, poorly-managed boundaries or inappropriate styles of fencing etc.);
- Conservation and management of Calleva Roman town and associated historic features;
- Localised suburban influence of some built development and roads, including suburban styles of fencing, signage, lighting and planting, and impacts on quiet, rural character in immediate areas.
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to existing urban edges, such as Chineham, Tadley and Bramley, encroaching into the Character Area;
- Prospect of further energy generation development, including solar farms.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **North Sherborne Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the North Sherborne Character Area is to conserve the overall rural pattern of farmland and woodland with small scale settlement, whilst limiting increases in urbanisation through incongruous development. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and the variety of woodland. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, siting of new development, and intrusion from certain types of development.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

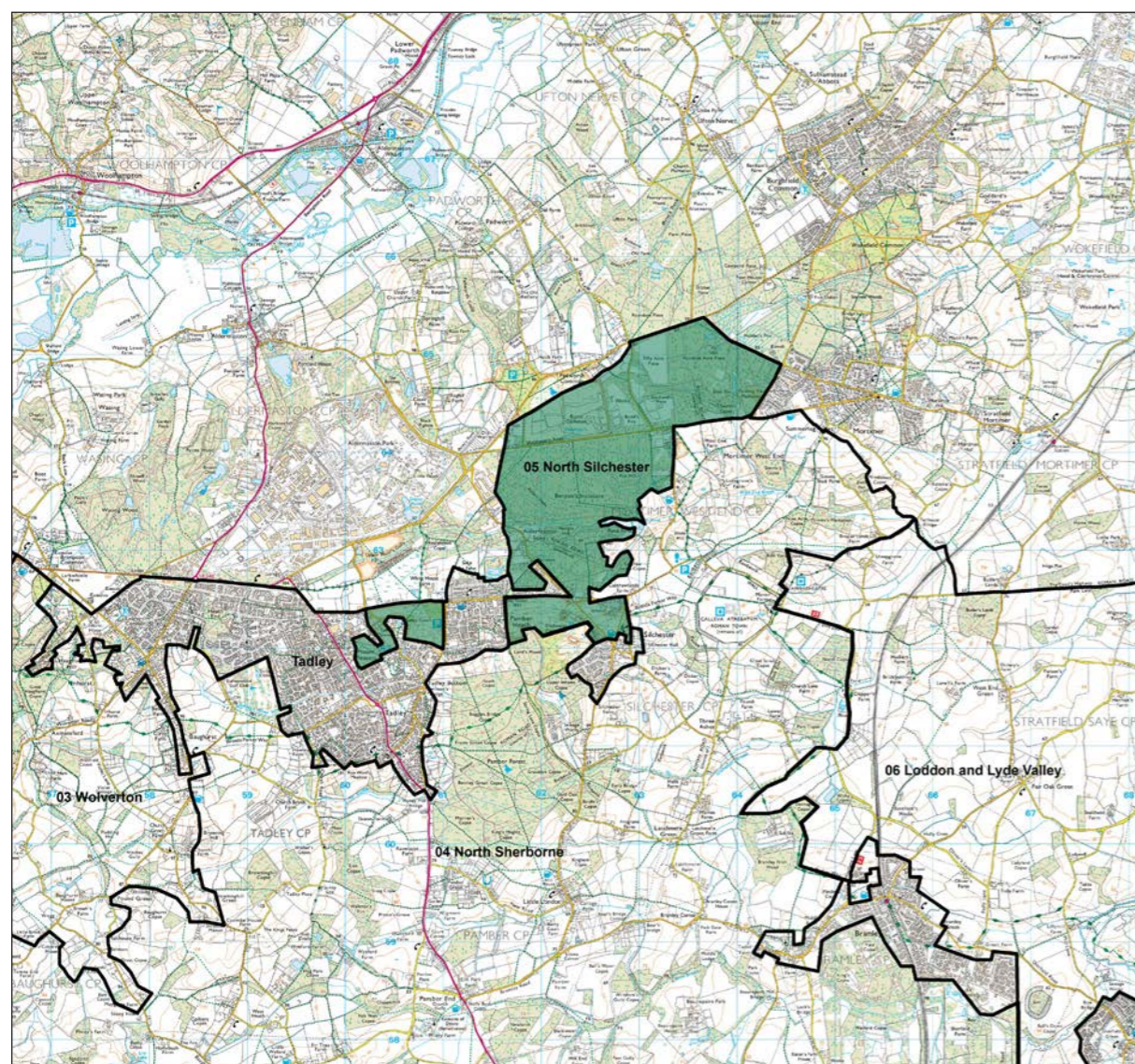
#### ***Land Management***

- Conserve, enhance and restore woodlands, in particular ancient woodland such as Pamber Forest, Monk Sherborne Wood, Morgaston Wood and Carpenters Down Wood, and other areas of woodland including smaller woods located across the Character Area, through effective long term management and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Encourage sensitive management of plantations for their species and wildlife value;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible, particularly next to sensitive habitats such as rivers and streams, including Silchester Brook and Bow Brook;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows to enhance the hedgerow network throughout the Character Area, and in particularly areas of more open arable fields such as towards the north of the Character Area;
- Encourage improved management of road verges and roadside hedgebanks, including along the winding lanes through the Character Area;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as hedgerows, woodlands, heath and grasslands;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assarted field patterns and woodlands, and encourage conservation of the those elements;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.

#### ***Built Development***

- New development should be associated with existing settlement, for example at Tadley, Sherborne St John, Chineham, and Bramley, where appropriate, and should respond to existing urban edges.
- Retain natural buffers and boundaries to settlements where possible, including the existing woodland, hedgerows, trees along boundaries surrounding Tadley, Chineham and Sherborne St John, and promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Retain the rural character along lanes, such as those within the vicinity of Little London, and conserve existing historic settlements, such as Ramsdell, Monk Sherborne and Three Ashes, as well as more isolated farmsteads such as Pamber Priory Farm (located to the south-west of Pamber End);
- Avoid visual intrusion from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Where possible limit effect of settlement expansion on the separate identities between Tadley and Silchester, and between Sherborne St John and Basingstoke, by retaining existing boundary hedges and trees in the area to help prevent visual or physical coalescence between the settlements.
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area;
- Ensure that potential road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, such as along Silchester Road through Little London, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

## CHARACTER AREA 5: NORTH SILCHESTER



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### Location and Boundaries

This small Character Area lies in the north of the Borough, its northern edge marked by the Borough boundary, although its character extends beyond. The western boundary is defined by the Borough boundary and the settlement of Pamber Heath. The southern and eastern boundary marks the transition to more open, mixed farmland and woodland of the North Sherborne Character Area.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by plateau gravels, giving rise to the heath soils and resulting vegetation characteristic of this area. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the early prehistoric period (Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was beginning to be cleared for agriculture and grazing. Heathland formation was the result of forest clearance from this time and from later periods. Over exploitation of areas of poorer soil led to a relatively rapid deterioration in soil fertility, and the emergence of distinctive heathland vegetation. In the medieval period this area was part of the Royal Forest of Pamber, used for hunting and the production of timber. In the 19th century timber plantations were established on some of the heathland, the plantations to the west of Mortimer having existed from 1810 onwards.



### Overall Landscape Character

This area is characterised and unified by distinct heath associated vegetation. The majority of the area is covered by coniferous heath plantation, which extends northwards beyond the Borough boundary, and gives a relatively formal, managed and uniform character to the area. In contrast to this managed landscape is a small area of remnant heathland at Silchester Common, east of Pamber Heath, and Tadley Common, east of Tadley, which have a rough and scrubby appearance. Much of the area retains a quiet character, although its predominantly rural nature is disrupted in western parts by the urban influence of Tadley, and to the north-east by Mortimer. These settlements and other individual properties are linked by a network of typically straight roads which cut through the plantation structure.

### North Silchester Key Characteristics

- Plateau landscape draining eastwards;
- Predominantly coniferous heath plantation, giving an enclosed, formal, relatively uniform character to the area, with small areas of mixed heathland and forest, and disturbed landscape;
- Mainly quiet and rural character, although the latter is affected in western parts by the urban influence of Tadley, and to its north-east by Mortimer;
- Area of quarry and landfill site on the north-western boundary of the area enclosed within the coniferous plantation structure;
- Heathland areas at Silchester Common and Tadley Common (part of the Pamber Forest and Silchester Common SSSI) form a scarce habitat type, the best example of *Calluna/Erica/Ulex* heathland on the Tertiary deposits in the Thames Basin;
- Low intervisibility across the area with plantation and trees within heath limiting views;
- Settlements of Silchester and Pamber Heath disrupt rural nature of southern parts of the area. Other individual properties are located adjacent to the plantations, reached along relatively straight, direct roads;
- Public Rights of Way provide a secluded experience for pedestrians through the woodland, and there is open access land at Silchester Common, Tadley Common and Burnt Common, although some areas of plantation have limited formal public access;
- Iron Age fort earthworks (SM24332) west of the former Pond Farm, and traces of the Roman Road running north-west from Calleva Atrebatum.

### Key Issues

- Poor species and structural diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Under-management of the small areas of ancient semi-natural woodland;
- Management of road verges;
- Loss and fragmentation of heathland and former heathland areas through inappropriate management (scrub invasion) and conversion to forestry or agricultural use, and the need for continued/extended management of heathland commons;
- Management and appropriate restoration of the landfill/quarry site on the northern boundary;
- Localised suburbanising influences of some built development and roads, including suburban styles of fencing, signage, lighting and planting;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Tadley, encroaching into the Character Area.

### GUIDANCE

#### North Silchester Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the North Silchester Character Area is to maintain the secluded peaceful nature of the landscape, primarily by conserving the extensive woodland and by maintaining and enhancing remaining areas of heathland, while limiting inappropriate urbanisation. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the heathland and woodland.

#### Landscape Guidelines

##### *Land Management*

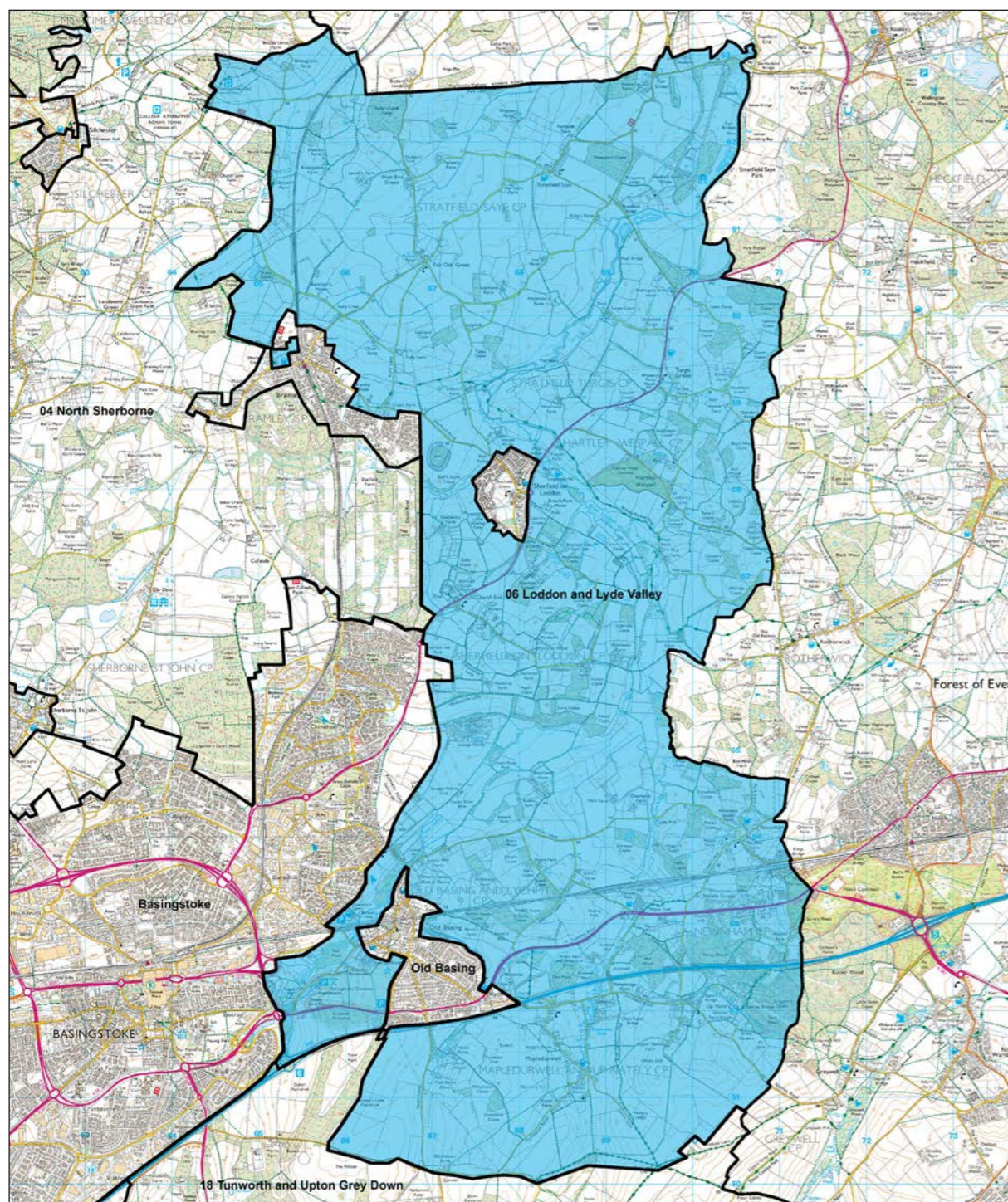
- Conserve the heathland habitats at Silchester Common and Tadley Common, preventing further encroachment by woodland and taking opportunities to restore and extend these habitats;
- Encourage restoration of mineral workings, including establishment of new heathland;
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands through effective long term management and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their ecological value, and sensitive management of plantations for their species and wildlife value;
- Ensure that infrastructure which supports leisure activities (including car parking, signage, seating and dog bins) is sensitivity designed and placed to conserve the rural character of the area, such as at Tadley Common;
- Encourage improved management of road verges;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional techniques, where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features, in particular the heathland and woodland.

##### *Built Development*

- Maintain a sense of seclusion, avoiding inappropriate increases to settlement, including spread of low density development from existing groups of dwellings, such as Aldermaston Soke;
- Encourage new built development to respond appropriately to the existing urban edge of Tadley, with retention of natural buffers and boundaries to settlement where possible, including existing woodland and tree cover adjacent to the town, and promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Conserve the separate identities of Silchester and Tadley by retaining woodland which separates the two settlements;
- Conserve areas of undisturbed wooded skyline;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline;
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.



## CHARACTER AREA 6: LODDON AND LYDE VALLEY



### Location and Boundaries

This Character Area lies in the north-east of the Borough with its northern and eastern edge defined by the Borough boundary. Its southern boundary defines the extent of the Loddon and Lyde valley system. The western boundary is formed partly by Old Basing, Chineham and Basingstoke and partly by changes in relief and vegetation characteristics.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by clays which have been dissected by the River Loddon and River Lyde, giving rise to the broad, shallow slopes characteristic of this area. The heavy soils are prone to

waterlogging, as evidenced by the network of drainage ditches which characterise the flat valley floor landscape and areas further afield. The southern extremity of the Character Area encompasses the north-facing chalkland slopes, from which the rivers rise before flowing northwards. The distinct change of geology to chalk south of the M3 is reflected in a larger-scale, more open, arable landscape.

Much of the Loddon and Lyde Valley was probably incorporated into the medieval Royal Forests of Pamber and of Eversley. Despite the royal protection, patches of woodland were cleared for agriculture and settlements in the medieval and post-medieval periods although some woodland patches have survived. More areas were cleared for agriculture and grazing, as parts of the medieval open fields systems were changed by enclosure, achieved mainly by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, although some areas, particularly in the south, were formally enclosed by act of parliament in the 18th-19th centuries. The area is particularly notable for the relatively large number of medieval moated sites, deer parks and other sites (such as hunting lodges) which have been preserved, or are known from documentary evidence.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is a diverse landscape of varying landcover and degrees of enclosure, ranging from mixed farmland and woodland on clay to arable chalklands. It is nevertheless unified by the broad and shallow slopes of the Loddon and Lyde river valleys, which give a coherence to the landscape. The northern and southern parts are characterised by large, open arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedgerows containing isolated mature trees, and only a few isolated copses of oak and ash woodland interspersed across the landscape. Woodland cover increases significantly within the centre of the area, such as Wildmoor where it is associated with the valley floor, creating a more enclosed, intimate and well-treed landscape (except in the vicinity of Blacklands Farm, to the north-east of Old Basing). Fields are predominantly arable on the higher valley slopes, with pasture on the lower valley slopes and the river floodplain. Basingstoke and Chineham exert an urban influence on the immediate south-western edge of the Character Area. Outside this urban area and the village of Old Basing, settlement density is low, with occasional villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads scattered throughout the area, accessed through a network of narrow winding roads. In these parts the landscape retains a particularly peaceful, rural character, although the quietness is disturbed in those areas near to the M3, A30, A33 and the railway.

### Loddon and Lyde Valley Key Characteristics

- Broad, shallow valley sides of the River Lyde and River Loddon that meander through, and unify, the varying landscape types;
- Pattern ranging from open farmland around Stratfield Saye, Blacklands Farm and Mapledurwell, to that which is smaller-scale and more enclosed in the mid-section of the area and within the valley itself. The flat, lowlying valley floor pasture has a distinctive pattern of drainage ditches, watercourses lined with willow, alder and poplar, water meadows and an often pastoral, remote character;
- Generally unspoilt, quiet and rural character, and a sense of remoteness in less accessible parts of the river valley, but with intrusion by major roads, including the A33, A30 and M3 motorway, railway lines, including the South Western Main Line, and the Reading to Basingstoke line, electricity pylons, which cross the Character Area in several locations, and by a waste management facility immediately east of Chineham;
- Relatively large-scale, open arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedgerows and infrequent woodland in the north and far south, reflecting 17th - 18th century informal enclosure and late 18th – 19th century parliamentary enclosure respectively;
- More enclosed assart fields within an intact, strong hedgerow and woodland structure (some of it assarted) between Stratfield Saye and Newnham;
- Nationally important habitat types, including the ancient semi-natural woodland, unimproved neutral grassland associated with the River Loddon alluvial floodplain (including the Stanford End Mills SSSI), areas of fen vegetation (the SSSI at Mapledurwell Fen holding one of central southern England's richest associations of fen species), and Greywell Tunnel SSSI (sheltering Britain's largest bat population);
- Localised, well-managed quality added by the Grade II Stratfield Saye Park, and 17th garden at Basing House;
- Relatively low intervisibility within the area, due to landform and vegetation minimising views, but more extensive views possible in the more open northern and southern landscapes;
- Low settlement density, with dispersed villages and hamlets, such as Stratfield Saye in the north, and Mapledurwell in the south, and isolated farmsteads, such as Hale and Deanlands Farms, to the north-west of Newnham, linked by a network of narrow winding roads. Several villages to the south are within conservation areas, with numerous listed buildings, including Mapledurwell, Up Natley and Newham;
- Several adjoining urban areas, including Bramley, Sherfield on Loddon, Basingstoke and Chineham and the village of Old Basing;
- The area is served by a network of Public Rights of Way, including part of the Brenda Parker Way, although some areas of farmland, and lengths of River Loddon and Lyde River are without formal public access. Hartley Wood Common is an area of Open Access land to the east of Sherfield on Loddon, and part of the Open Access land of Hook Common is within the south-east corner of the Character Area;
- Historic river crossings, including stone bridges, and pedestrian footbridges, forming key locations in the landscape with cultural significance;
- Many historic landscape features across the area, from medieval moated sites, deer parks, hunting lodges and castles, to scheduled ancient monuments including Bulls Down Camp Iron Age hillfort and remnant enclosed strips and furlongs in Stratfield Saye parish. Old mills, which have contributed to the Valley's development, add to the sense of place.

### Key Issues

- Inappropriate management of floodplain grazing marsh;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to rivers, streams and other sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Identification and conservation of all water meadows, and their appropriate management to allow for shallow winter flooding;
- Poor species and structural diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands including hazel coppice woods;
- Loss of broadleaf woodlands;
- Extensive hedgerow removal in the past, and general decline in condition of hedgerows and trees (with frequent stag-headed trees), particularly within more open arable landscapes on clay areas to the north;
- Management of hedgerows (and retention of tree saplings within them), and field patterns of historic significance;
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved neutral/acidic grasslands, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Reduction in biodiversity levels through agricultural practices;
- The intrusion caused by the high number of electricity pylons/lines north, east and south-east of Bramley/Bramley Green, and also north of Old Basing, along the River Loddon;
- Some localised visual intrusion and noise from built development and roads, especially around the fringes of Basingstoke, and near the M3, A33, A30 and railways, which have an impact on the tranquility of immediate areas;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Basingstoke and Bramley, encroaching into the Character Area.

## GUIDANCE

### Loddon and Lyde Valley Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Loddon and Lyde Valley Character Area is to conserve the peaceful remote valley landscapes, with their drainage channels, riparian vegetation, meadows and pasture, whilst limiting adverse influence from extensions to adjoining settlements, and limit the adverse urbanising influence of urban extension into remote areas within the character area. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and waterside vegetation and meadows.

### Landscape Guidelines

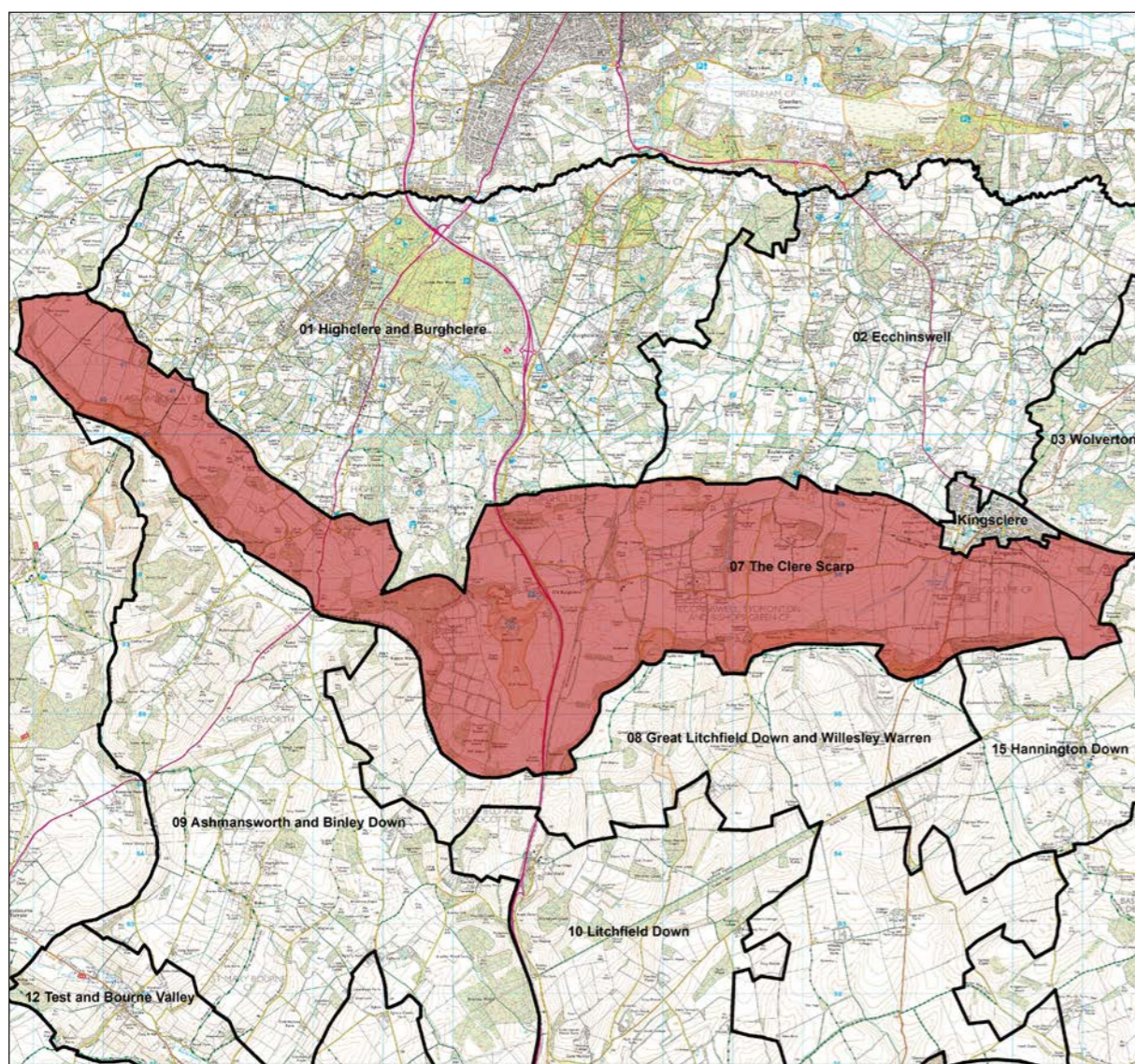
#### Land Management

- Conserve and enhance the natural corridor and the rural setting of the River Loddon and Lyde River, particularly where the Loddon extends towards the urban area of Basingstoke;
- Conserve and enhance the waterside meadows and pastures with cattle grazing management, and resist the improvement of grasslands and drainage schemes which could disturb the characteristic landcover, vegetation or adversely affect ecological value;
- Conserve, enhance and restore riparian woodland, the stock of individual field and riverbank trees, and the blocks and bands of tree cover at the edge of the area that screen development associated with Bramley, Sherfield on Loddon and Basingstoke. Promote traditional woodland management techniques with local landowners and the farming community;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques, to conserve and enhance key landscape features throughout the Character Area, such as relatively small-scale field pattern within the valley, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, ditches and ditchline willows, meadows, and other wetlands;
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands and the use of locally appropriate species such as willows, alder and oak;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows to enhance the hedgerow network throughout the Character Area, but in particular within more open arable landscapes on clay areas to the north;
- Encourage enhancement of the landscape along the A33 and A30 roads, and promote strategies for the Loddon floodplain, while limiting the effect of increases in development;
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities and new Public Rights of Way links for leisure engagement with watercourses, in particular the Loddon and Lyde;
- Encourage conservation of historic landscape pattern of meadows and waterways, and understanding of underlying archaeology.

### Built Development

- Retain the rural, largely undisturbed character of the Loddon and Lyde valleys, including avoiding impact from increases in development and encouraging new development to be sensitively sited and designed with appropriate scale, form and detailing, including materials.
- Any new development should be associated with existing settlement, for example Basingstoke, Bramley and Sherfield on Loddon, where appropriate, and should respond to the existing urban edges with retention of natural buffers including trees and hedges along boundaries surrounding settlement.
- Where possible limit effect of settlement expansion on the separate identities between Bramley and Sherfield on Loddon, and between Basingstoke and Old Basing, by retaining existing boundary hedges and trees in the area to help prevent visual or physical coalescence between the settlements;
- Promote appropriate species, scale and form of boundary treatment to avoid negative visual impact of inappropriate boundaries on the rural character of the floodplain, and help integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Encourage the retention of woodland planting that screens settlement and roads adjacent to the area and consider additional planting to screen existing or new development that intrudes in rural views;
- Avoid adverse impact on the landscape character from intensification of transport related development along the M3, A30 and A33 road corridors;
- Conserve the narrow winding rural lanes, and small bridges which cross the Loddon and Lyde, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network or bridges which would change their character;
- Resist urbanisation of roads through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter. Promote the use of traditional or rural signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context;
- Ensure that lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' in the largely unsettled floodplain.

## CHARACTER AREA 7: THE CLERE SCARP



### Location and Boundaries

This linear Character Area is located to the west of the Borough, running from the south of Kingsclere, past Highclere Park, to the Borough boundary and beyond. Its northern boundary is defined by the lowland mosaic landscape, marking a distinct change in underlying geology, relief and vegetation characteristics, and incorporates the distinctive hills below the main north-facing scarp, within the Character Area. Its southern boundary generally marks the transition between the top of the scarp slope and the open dip slope, which falls gently to the south. The Character Area is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

The scarp face is the product of erosion of the east-west chalk anticline at Kingsclere, which has exposed the hard middle chalk layer, forming the dramatic scarp face and part of the lower footslopes. At several points, such as at Watership Down, coombes penetrate into the scarp face. A narrow belt of sand and sandstone has been exposed on the scarp footslopes between Kingsclere and Old Burghclere resulting in a strongly undulating landform, protruding from the surrounding lower lying chalkland. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing, and

after which only limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. In addition to extant monuments of Bronze and Iron Age date, which are clearly visible in the landscape today, time depth is indicated by remnant field systems (soilmarks and lynchets), preserved on the southern slopes of Beacon Hill (an extant Iron Age hillfort) and on Lower Woodcott Down. These may result from prehistoric or medieval agriculture. Sydmonton is amongst settlements mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Medieval open fields systems were replaced by enclosure by both informal and formal (parliamentary) means during the 17th-19th centuries.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is an area dominated by the dramatic escarpment, an example of a distinctive and scarce chalk landscape type. Its strongly linear form brings a unifying and cohesive character to the scarp footslopes and offers long views from points such as Beacon Hill. Both the scarp and its footslopes display localised variations in landcover and use. The escarpment is characterised by calcareous grassland with small areas of encroaching scrub and blocks of infrequent woodland. A slightly higher proportion of woodland exists on the scarp and footslopes to the west of the area, creating a rather more enclosed landscape than that in the east. Oak woodland is dominant within the western part of the area, giving way to predominantly beech woodlands within the coombes. Racehorse gallops and stud farms characterise the bottom of the scarp, south of Kingsclere, whilst at Sydmonton, parkland provides a more ornamental and managed element. Settlement density within this area is limited with only a small scattering of farm buildings. As a result, a sense of remoteness and tranquillity pervades the landscape, except in the vicinity of the A34 and A343. Roads are relatively straight and direct.

### The Clere Scarp Key Characteristics

- Dramatic steep chalk scarp face, forming an impressive backdrop to the lowland landscapes to the north, and the villages and Conservation Areas at the foot of the north-facing slopes within adjoining Character Areas, and affording long views from points such as Beacon Hill. The landform and semi-natural character of the vegetation which clothes parts of it creates a strong sense of place;
- Predominantly open pasture with small areas of encroaching scrub and occasional woodland blocks on the steep scarp slopes, with arable fields present on more shallow slopes;
- Lies within North Wessex Downs AONB, generally possessing an unspoilt character. Landform restricts extent of built form or roads. There is limited intrusion from people, traffic and noise, except in particular locations, for example Beacon Hill, and near the A34 and A343. Radio mast at Cottington's Hill is a landmark;
- Generally large, open parliamentary arable fields below the scarp. Slightly more enclosed fields to the west with greater woodland cover and stronger hedgerow structure;
- Many examples of nationally scarce habitat types including six SSSIs. Areas of valuable remnant unimproved chalk grassland on the scarp face, from Sydmonton to the east, and also at Beacon Hill, although scrub encroachment is threatening its extent and quality. Scattered remnants of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland;
- Parkland at Sydmonton bringing a more managed element to the central area;
- Generally high intervisibility within and outside the area, particularly from the top of the scarp and the open arable fields to the north;
- Low settlement density with only a small scattering of farm buildings. Roads are relatively straight and direct;
- The Wayfarer's Walk Long Distance Path runs along the top of the scarp, allowing extensive views and a sense of exposure. Public rights of way cross the lower slopes, particularly to the east of the A34, and there are areas of Open Access land at Pilot Hill, Beacon Hill, Ladle Hill, Watership Down, Combe Hole, The Warren and White Hill, with car parking at Beacon Hill, White Hill and near Watership Down. However, areas to the west of the A34 have few public rights of way and limited formal public access;
- Significant number of extant prehistoric monuments along the edge of the scarp, including the dramatic landscape feature and Iron Age hillfort of Beacon Hill, plus numerous barrows and earthworks.

### Key Issues

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands, including hazel coppice woods;
- Loss of broadleaf woodlands;
- Loss of hedgerows within the scarp footslopes, fragmenting and compromising the unity of the hedgerow network;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic importance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Scrub encroachment on the scarp and on Beacon Hill;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Loss, fragmentation and inappropriate management of unimproved calcareous grassland;
- Erosion and other impacts on fragile chalk grassland and archaeological sites from increasing visitor pressure, particularly at Beacon Hill;
- Some adverse impacts of horse grazing (eg rank grassland with weeds, poorly-managed boundaries, or inappropriate styles of fencing etc.);
- Visual intrusion from gallops (eg fencing and associated infrastructure);
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Loss of biodiversity value due to intensive farming practices;
- Maintenance of uninterrupted views to the scarp;
- Visual and noise intrusion from the A34 and A343. Further visual intrusion from major pylon line at Watership Down, and landmark of radio mast at Cottington's Hill;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Kingsclere, encroaching into the Character Area.

## GUIDANCE

### The Clere Scarp Landscape Aims

The strategic aims for The Clere Scarp Character Area include maintaining the wide ranging views from viewpoints along the scarp and to preserve the sparsely settled nature of the area. The pattern of hedgerows along field boundaries should be conserved and enhanced, invasion of scrub resisted, and the remnant areas of chalk grassland should be conserved and extended where possible. The open nature of the landscape which forms a backdrop to rural areas to the north should be conserved. The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan should also be taken into account to conserve and enhance the landscape within the AONB (see below).

### Landscape Guidelines

#### Land Management

- Protect important views and maintain areas of open, undeveloped skyline.
- Control invasive scrub, such as at Beacon Hill and White Hill;
- Conserve and enhance the areas of chalk grassland and consider opportunities to extend and link fragmented sites, such as at Sydmonton and Beacon Hill;
- Encourage consistent and appropriate management, reinforcement, and restocking of hedgerows to enhance the historic hedgerow network across the Character Area, and in particular within the scarp footslopes;
- Conserve and enhance effective long term management and replanting of the numerous small woodland blocks, particularly to the east; and restore woodland in general to the west;
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques with local landowners and the farming community;
- Promote the use of locally appropriate species such as oak and beech;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the landscape, and underlying archaeology to landowners;
- Encourage appropriate siting and management of gallops and associated infrastructure;
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities for leisure and tourism through visitor management plan to predict and support appropriate levels of circulation and movement patterns;
- Resist the loss of rural character through the spread of urbanising features associated with leisure use such as car parks;
- Encourage appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for footpaths and car parks to retain the rural, unsettled character of the landscape;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as the existing field pattern, hedgerows and woodland, in particular the oak and beech woodlands;

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the landscape and land management key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- Management of the Ridgeway National Trail and other rights of way to maximise enjoyment by responsible users and minimise conflicts;
- Maintenance and, where possible, extension of chalk grassland habitat;
- Conserving and enhancing the remoteness and expansive open scale of the downland landscape;
- Scope for more and better management of woodland in the AONB, especially smaller woods, to improve habitat for wildlife and provide an economic return. Issues related to the horse racing industry;

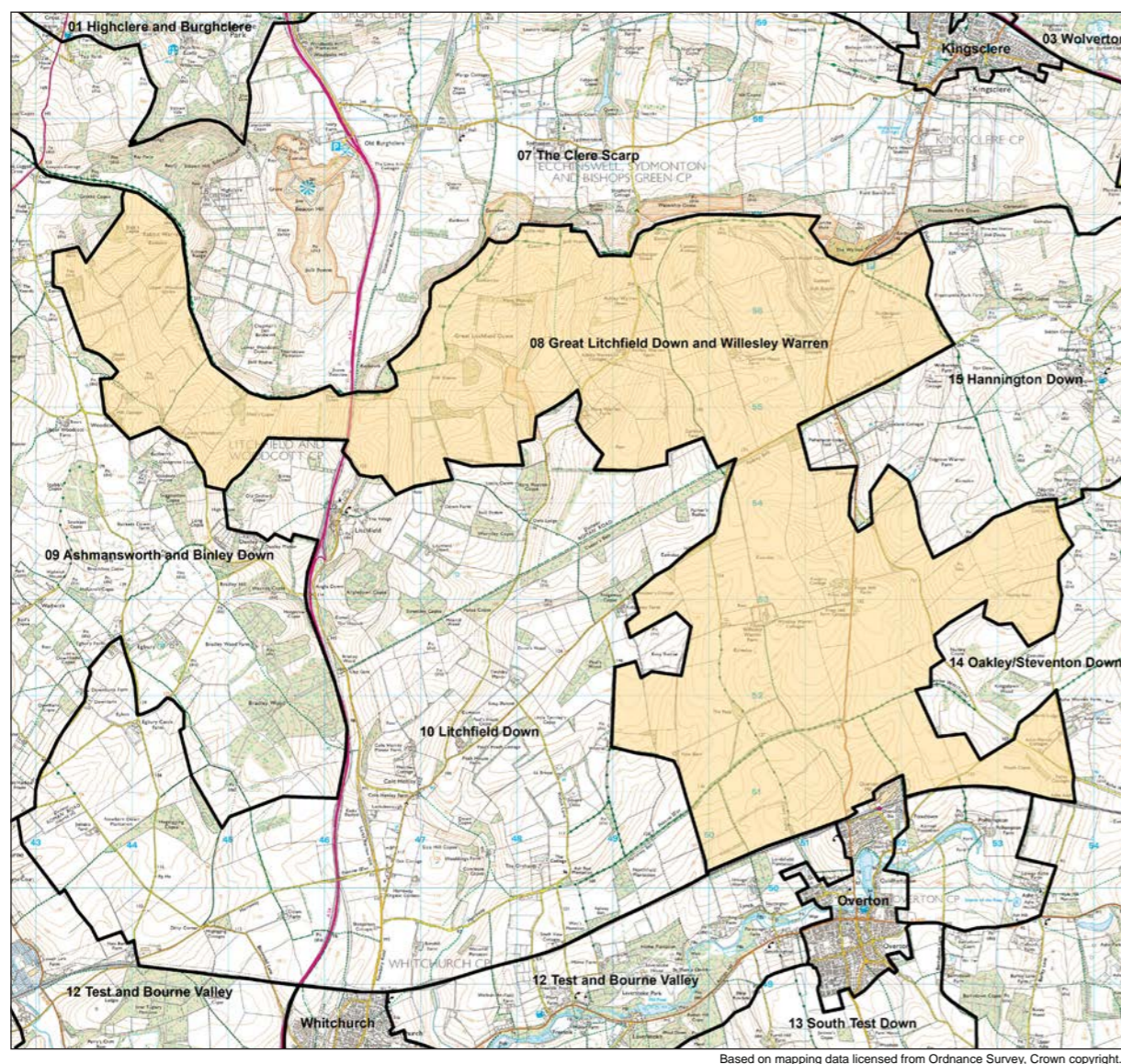
### Built Development

- Conserve the sense of a rural, sparsely settled area with visible development limited to occasional traditional farmsteads;
- Any new built development should be sited to take into account long views to and from the scarp;
- Resist the spread of settlement up the slopes from the foot of the ridge, such as at the southern edge of Kingsclere. Encourage new built development to respond appropriately to the existing urban edge with retention of hedgerows and tree belts along the southern edge of Kingsclere. Promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Consider the impact of development in adjacent areas in views from the ridgeline. Maintain the rural setting and containment of villages and Conservation Areas such as East Woodhay and Ecchinswell at the foot of the scarp slopes;

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- New large free-standing dwellings as replacement dwellings in the open countryside;
- Good design of new development, sited within, or on the edge of, existing settlements and avoiding exposed locations;
- Impact on dark skies and tranquillity of high-powered external lighting, especially where poorly directed or in an exposed location (not usually subject to planning control);
- Potential for certain forms of development to intrude on the wider landscape, including masts, pylons, wind turbine developments, photovoltaic schemes, and minerals and waste schemes, threatening the senses of remoteness and tranquillity, and landscape quality and heritage assets;
- Impact from the racing industry from new gallops and facilities where inappropriately located and or designed;
- Impact from equestrian uses and structures generally where new development is expansive in area, in greenfield locations, poorly designed and/or located on exposed sites;
- Development that results in a material loss of tranquillity and/or impact on the dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs or its setting;
- Impact of road signage, street lighting and other highway clutter on landscape character, including within settlements. Measures which have an urbanising effect on AONB character and are thus generally inappropriate include: oversized, multiple and yellowbacked road signs; new street lighting in previously unlit locations; lighting that allows spillage or glare; road markings; concrete kerbing; illuminated bollards; fencing; and elaborate traffic-calming schemes.

## CHARACTER AREA 8: GREAT LITCHFIELD DOWN AND WILLESLEY WARREN



### Location and Boundaries

This open, rolling area forms a distinct Character Area within the middle of the Borough and constitutes a central part of the south-facing chalk dip slope. Its northern boundary is defined by the dramatic scarp face, which marks a significant change in topography. The southern boundary is marked by the River Test valley, with a change in topography and enclosure. The east and west boundaries mark a general transition to a more enclosed landscape, with a greater frequency of woodland blocks and stronger, more frequent hedgerow structure. The Character Area is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by chalk, which has been covered in places by clay with flint deposits. Erosion of this underlying geology has led to the formation of a rolling, strongly undulating landform, with numerous dry valleys. Elevated relief and lack of vegetation cover contributes to an exposed and remote character. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated at least as long ago as the Neolithic period, when the original forest cover began to be cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. This process continued through the prehistoric period, after which only limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. Further evidence for the time depth in the area is indicated by remnant field systems (soilmarks and lynchets), preserved to the east of the unfinished Iron Age hill fort

of Ladle Hill. These may result from prehistoric or medieval agriculture, and are currently under arable cultivation. The medieval open fields and downland were replaced by enclosure, achieved by both informal and formal (parliamentary) means during the 17th-19th centuries. Settlement in this area is small scale and scattered and appears always to have been so.



### Overall Landscape Character

Landscape character within this area is comparatively uniform, with coherence and unity provided by the area's scale and openness. Large, open arable fields, with a weak hedgerow and woodland structure, separate it from the surrounding, more enclosed, chalkland landscapes. Occasional small areas of pasture are distributed throughout the area. A regular, formal, wooded element within the open landscape is formed by Robley Belt, part of a series of linear plantations marking the route of the straight Roman road that traverses the area. The north of the landscape is notable for the 'gallops' for racehorse training, which take advantage of well-drained springy turf. The landscape is sparsely populated, with infrequent farmsteads dispersed across the area. Due to the low density of settlement, roads are also few and, where they are present, generally follow a straight and direct route. The area is remote from major urban influences, ensuring that the landscape has retained a quiet, rural character, apart from around the A34 in the west, and the detracting feature of a major pylon line across the north.

### Great Litchfield Down and Willesley Warren Key Characteristics

- Dramatic sweeping landform and smooth curves of open chalk downs, with a sense of elevation and expansiveness and open, uninterrupted views, giving a distinctive sense of place;
- Generally remote rural character, lying within the North Wessex Downs AONB, with limited intrusion from people, traffic and noise, except in west of area where the A34 disturbs the quietness;
- Very large, open and regular arable fields, reflecting high ground parliamentary fields of the late 18th – 19th centuries, 17th and 18th century ‘ladder fields’ and, in western part, large wavy fields;
- Infrequent woodland blocks, including scattered remnants of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland, and other fragments of broadleaved woodland and coniferous plantation;
- Examples of scarce habitat types such as small remnants of unimproved chalk grassland, in addition to the fragments of ancient woodland, which are particularly valuable due to the area’s otherwise low ecological diversity;
- Open, exposed character and high intervisibility within and outside the area, due to low or absent hedgerows and infrequent woodland. More confined views within the dry valleys;
- Long-standing small-scale settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, such as Ashley Warren (in the northern portion of the Character Area), Willesley Warren Farm (in the southern portion of the Character Area), and a limited number of small groups of dwellings, including Cannon Heath Cottages (to the north-east of the Character Area), and infrequent roads, engendering a sense of remoteness;
- Typically straight, direct roads, including the Roman road running south-west from Calleva Atrebatum which is marked by the distinct linear wooded feature of Robley Belt;
- The Wayfarer’s Walk Long Distance Path crosses through the northern part of the Character Area, and there are a number of other public routes, including links to Overton to the south, which provide a sense of remoteness and isolation to walkers through the open downs. There is some Open Access land to the north of Hare Warren Copse and near Thorn Down, however the western half of the Character Area, either side of the A34, has few Public Rights of Way and limited public access.
- The pylon line through the north of the area is a notable detractor, given the open nature of the area and limited number of other features in the landscape;
- Important ancient hill fort site at Ladle Hill, with many barrows, earthworks and other archaeological features (and extant prehistoric monuments) elsewhere on the chalk.

### Key Issues

- The simplicity of the landscape, created by the limited number of hedgerows, woodland or other landscape elements, reduces ecological diversity;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Management of roadside verges and hedgebanks;
- Loss and fragmentation of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture, through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland, reducing biological diversity;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and buffers;
- Intensive arable farming resulting in ecologically sterile landscape, with low habitat and species diversity;
- Localised visual intrusion in open landscape of fencing in association with gallops for racehorse training;
- Some visual intrusion from large-scale farm buildings in this open landscape. Also the detracting features of the A34, a major pylon line in the north, and landmark of radio mast at Cottington’s Hill.

### GUIDANCE

#### Great Litchfield Down and Willesley Warren Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Great Litchfield Down and Willesley Warren Character Area is to conserve the open character of the area, retaining the sparsely settled ambiance, remaining hedgerow boundaries and remnant chalk grassland. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network. The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan should also be taken into account to conserve and enhance the landscape within the AONB (see below).

#### Landscape Guidelines

##### Land Management

- Carry out consistent management and restocking of hedgerows and nurture new hedgerow trees to maintain stock and enhance the historic hedgerow network across the Character Area;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material;
- Limit increase in visual intrusion from gallops and associated infrastructure;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows, chalk grassland and woodlands;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns and woodlands.

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the landscape and land management key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- Management of the Ridgeway National Trail and other rights of way to maximise enjoyment by responsible users and minimise conflicts;
- Maintenance and, where possible, extension of chalk grassland habitat;
- Conserving and enhancing the remoteness and expansive open scale of the downland landscape;
- Scope for more and better management of woodland in the AONB, especially smaller woods, to improve habitat for wildlife and provide an economic return.



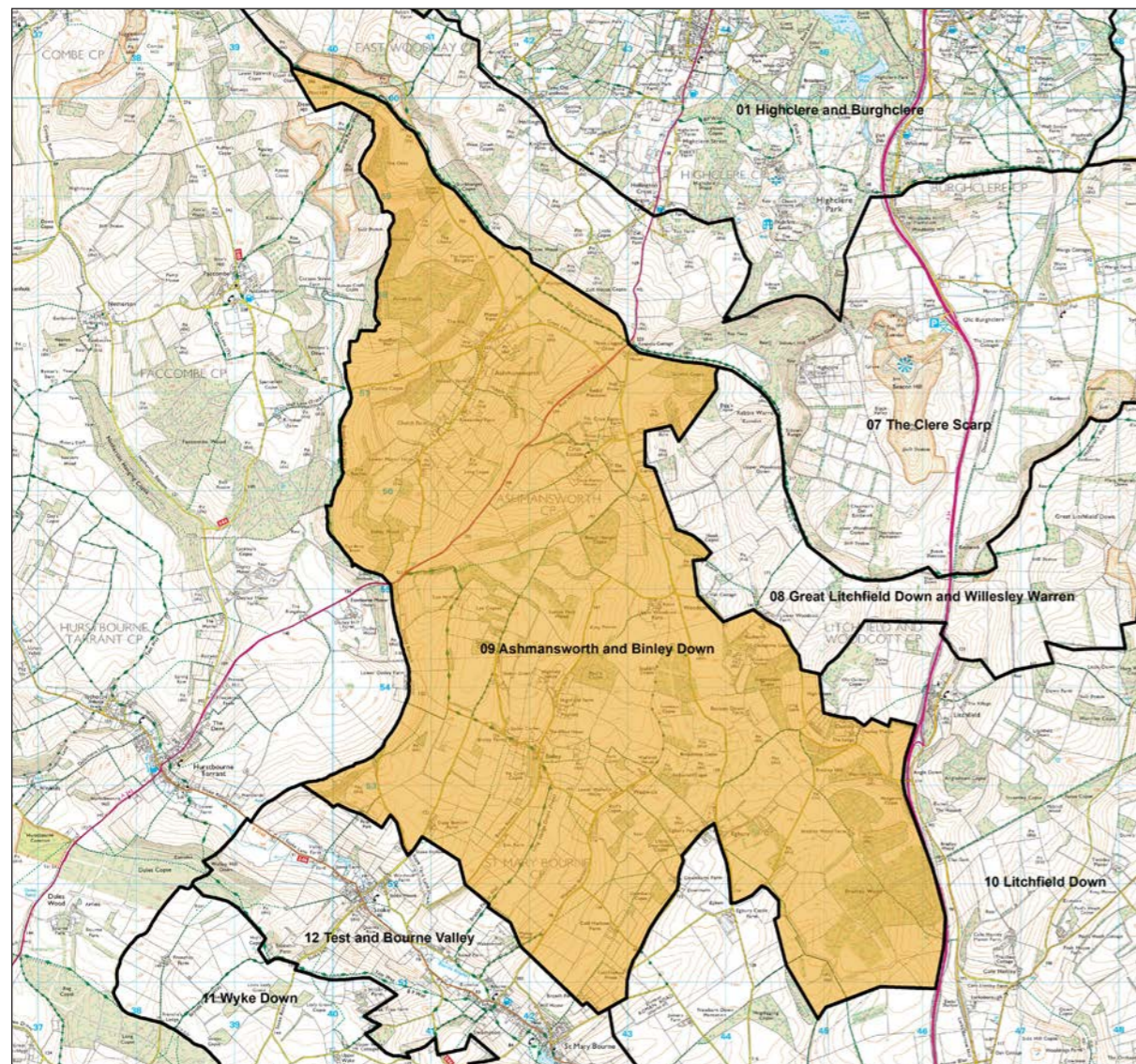
### **Built Development**

- Conserve the sense of an open unsettled landscape, and maintain open views across uninterrupted rolling landform, with development located to minimise visual impact on the landscape;
- Encourage new built development to respect local characteristics, including support of sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Encourage any new large-scale structures to take account of large scale, open landscape character and rural context when considering form, scale and materials of proposed development.
- Avoid the location of any new large mass of development or bulky structures where they would be visually intrusive. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact, particularly regarding issues of intrusive colour and glare, and integrate with the area's rural context.

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- New large free-standing dwellings as replacement dwellings in the open countryside;
- Good design of new development, sited within, or on the edge of, existing settlements and avoiding exposed locations;
- The loss of rural character through suburbanising influences from new development (new fencing, lighting, signage, parking areas, paved footpaths, loss of native hedgerows and creation of new garden areas);
- Impact on dark skies and tranquillity of high-powered external lighting, especially where poorly directed or in an exposed location (not usually subject to planning control);
- Potential for certain forms of development to intrude on the wider landscape, including masts, pylons, wind turbine developments, photovoltaic schemes, and minerals and waste schemes, threatening the senses of remoteness and tranquillity, and landscape quality and heritage assets;
- Impact from the racing industry from new gallops and facilities where inappropriately located and or designed;
- Impact from equestrian uses and structures generally where new development is expansive in area, in greenfield locations, poorly designed and/or located on exposed sites;
- Development that results in a material loss of tranquillity and/or impact on the dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs or its setting;
- Impact of road signage, street lighting and other highway clutter on landscape character, including within settlements. Measures which have an urbanising effect on AONB character and are thus generally inappropriate include: oversized, multiple and yellowbacked road signs; new street lighting in previously unlit locations; lighting that allows spillage or glare; road markings; concrete kerbing; illuminated bollards; fencing; and elaborate traffic-calming schemes.

## CHARACTER AREA 9: ASHMANSWORTH AND BINLEY DOWN



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### Location and Boundaries

This diverse area lies on the western edge of the Borough. Its northern boundary is clearly defined by the top of the steep chalk scarp, marking a change in relief and vegetation characteristics. Its southern boundary is defined by the distinct Bourne valley, with its change in topography and landcover. The eastern boundary marks a general transition to the slightly more open mosaic of semi-enclosed arable farmland, which characterises the Litchfield Down Character Area. The Character Area is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

The geology within this area consists of chalk beds overlain with areas of clay with flint deposits on areas of higher ground, creating an undulating landform. Steep slopes near Ashmansworth mark the transition between clay deposits and the lower lying chalk beds. To the south of the area, tributaries of the Bourne erode into the surrounding chalk beds, forming shallow, parallel valleys. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. After this time only limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. There is an extant Neolithic long barrow within the area, and good evidence for Iron Age and Roman activity (Hampshire SMR).

The settlements of Crux Easton and Woodcott are among those mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Medieval open field systems were largely replaced by enclosure, mainly by informal means, during the 17th-18th centuries. However, S-shaped boundaries of some rare remnant fields may still reflect their former position within the field systems.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is a landscape of varied topography, ranging from steep slopes to more linear, shallow valleys, and is unified by a general consistency in landcover. A medium to large scale mosaic of farmland and frequent woodland blocks characterises the area, creating a semi-enclosed or enclosed landscape. Predominantly arable fields lie on higher ground, bounded by a relatively strong structure of hedgerows and trees, with pasture generally confined to steep valley sides and floor. The steeper slopes of the clay plateau to the north have a slightly more enclosed nature with a denser pattern of vegetation. Scattered farmsteads, isolated villages, and hamlets characterise this sparsely populated area. Settlements have developed along narrow roads which form a winding network through the landscape, that has maintained its unspoilt, intimate and rural character, remote from urban influences.

### Ashmanworth and Binley Down Key Characteristics

- Varied landform, consisting of a steep, relatively enclosed, valley system in the north around Ashmansworth and, in the south, a series of shallow ridges and valleys running parallel to each other into the Bourne valley;
- Dominated by rolling chalkland and unifying pattern of woodland blocks which (combined with open farmland, frequent hedgerows, trees and occasional parkland) form a landscape with a distinctive sense of place;
- Lies within North Wessex Downs AONB and generally possesses an unspoilt, quiet and rural character, with a sense of remoteness and limited intrusion from people, traffic and noise;
- Predominantly medium to large-scale arable fields reflecting 17th/18th century informal enclosure in the centre and, in the north, later parliamentary enclosure, bounded by intact hedgerows and frequent woodland blocks. Smaller fields, mainly under pasture, lie within the steeper valley slopes;
- Slightly more enclosed assarted land to the north on the steeper slopes of the clay plateau, with a higher proportion of hedgerow trees and a denser vegetation pattern, including occasional woodland 'hangers' on slopes;
- In the south, 17th and 18th century small wavy-edged fields and ladder fields. The range of field types throughout the Character Area indicates historic time-depth in the landscape;
- Examples of scarce habitat types, especially small remnants of unimproved calcareous grassland in the far north, and frequent scattered blocks of ancient woodland, including Sidley Wood (an SSSI containing ancient hornbeam coppice, with no comparable stands known elsewhere in south central England);
- Moderate to low intervisibility within the area with the high proportion of vegetation cover limiting the extent of views;
- Low settlement density, with isolated villages and hamlets, such as Ashmansworth, which is a Conservation Area, and scattered farmsteads along the narrow roads that largely follow the contours, including along the narrow valleys which lead to the Bourne Valley to the south;
- A relatively good density of Public Rights of Way across the majority of the area, although there are only small areas of Open Access land, and the steep slopes and woodland within the northern corner of the Character Area have limited public access;
- A line of pylons cross the middle of the Character Area, although their prominence in the view is tempered by surrounding tree cover;
- Earthworks in Danegrove Copse (SM 450) and a long barrow (SM 12084) within Litchfield and Woodcott parish.

### Key Issues

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands including hazel coppice woods;
- Some localised weakening of landscape structure in the slightly more open landscape types, resulting from hedgerow removal, and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural improvement;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Management of road verges and hedge banks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Decline in extent of chalk grassland, and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement;
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved grassland, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Loss of biodiversity within areas of intensive farmland;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitat areas;
- Localised noise intrusion from the A343, and visual intrusion from major pylon line across the centre of the area.

### GUIDANCE

#### Ashmanworth and Binley Down Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Ashmansworth and Binley Down Character Area is to conserve the rural mosaic of fields and woodland and limit increases in urbanisation through further development along the rural lanes. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland.

The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan should also be taken into account to conserve and enhance the landscape within the AONB.

#### Landscape Guidelines

##### Land Management

- Conserve and enhance effective long term management of woodland, including ancient natural woodland, and 'hangers' such as those towards the north of the Character Area, and hazel coppicing;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows, across the Character Area generally, and restoration of hedges along field boundaries to enhance the hedgerow network in more open areas, towards the centre and south of the Character Area;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such woodlands and hedgerows;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns and woodlands. Conserve historic elements of the landscape.

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the landscape and land management key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- Management of the Ridgeway National Trail and other rights of way to maximise enjoyment by responsible users and minimise conflicts;
- Maintenance and, where possible, extension of chalk grassland habitat (such as the remnants of unimproved calcareous grassland in the far north);
- Conserving and enhancing the remote, secluded and relatively undeveloped character of more enclosed and intimate landscapes, including the character of the lanes;
- The need for appropriate woodland management, including the viable use of timber products,

particularly for fuel; Encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes, husbandry and ecology and ensuring future veteran tree succession;

- Maintaining the pattern of discrete villages set within a quiet rural landscape and ensuring that the views to the surrounding dramatic scarps are undamaged.

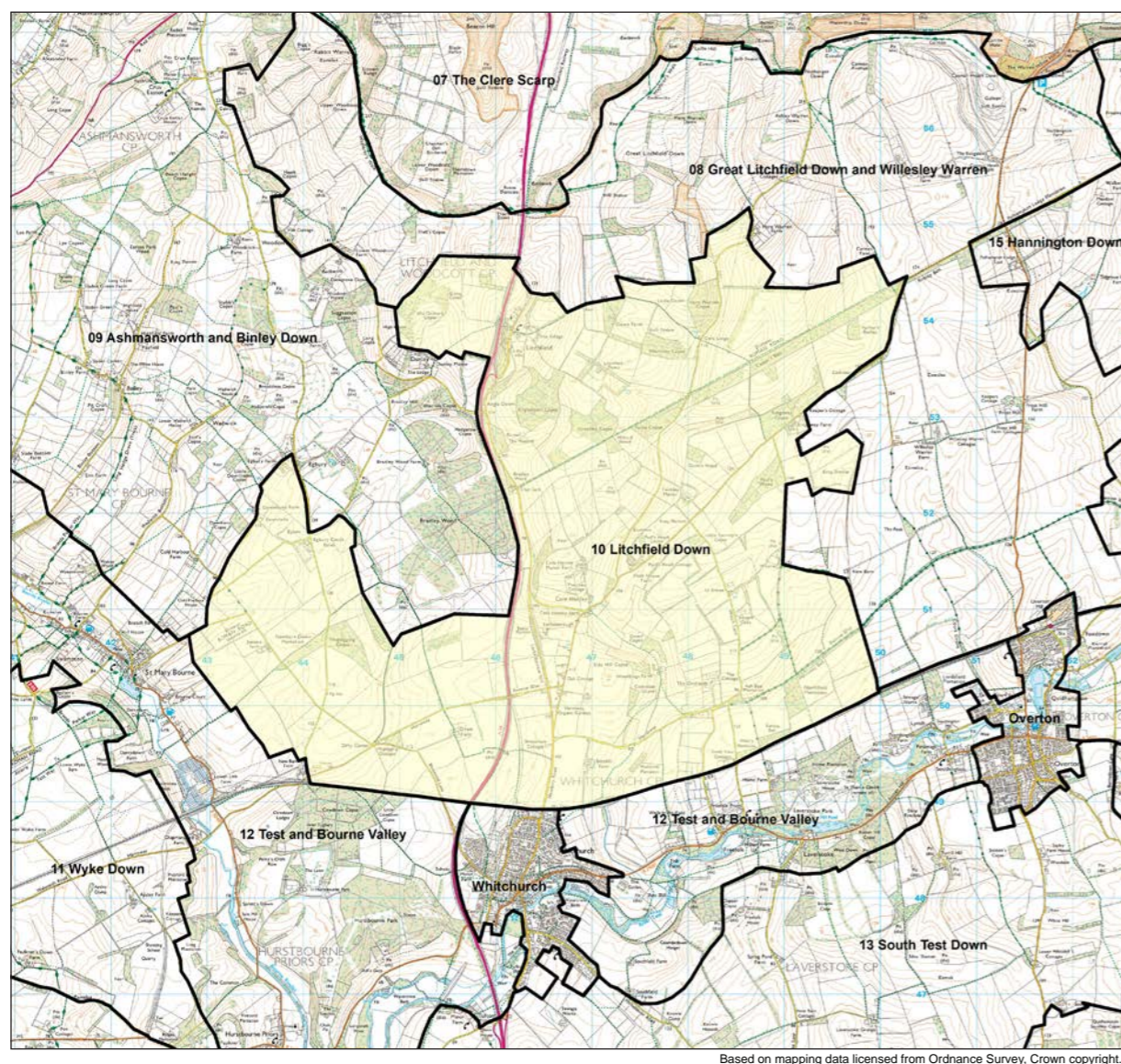
#### ***Built Development***

- Retain the sense of a rural, sparsely settled area by limiting adverse effects of expansion of settlement, in particular development along rural lanes, and conserve existing historic settlements, such as Ashmansworth and farmsteads;
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials.

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- New large free-standing dwellings as replacement dwellings in the open countryside;
- The loss of rural character through suburbanising influences from new development (new fencing, lighting, signage, parking areas, paved footpaths, loss of native hedgerows and creation of new garden areas);
- Impact on dark skies and tranquillity of high-powered external lighting, especially where poorly directed or in an exposed location (not usually subject to planning control);
- Potential for certain forms of development to intrude on the wider landscape, including masts, pylons, wind turbine developments, photovoltaic schemes, and minerals and waste schemes, threatening the senses of remoteness and tranquillity, and landscape quality and heritage assets;
- Development that results in a material loss of tranquillity and/or impact on the dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs or its setting;
- Impact of road signage, street lighting and other highway clutter on landscape character, including within settlements. Measures which have an urbanising effect on AONB character and are thus generally inappropriate include: oversized, multiple and yellowbacked road signs; new street lighting in previously unlit locations; lighting that allows spillage or glare; road markings; concrete kerbing; illuminated bollards; fencing; and elaborate traffic-calming schemes.

## CHARACTER AREA 10: LITCHFIELD DOWN



### Location and Boundaries

This undulating, semi-enclosed Character Area lies within the central part of the Borough. Its northern and eastern boundaries mark a distinct change to the open, large scale arable fields that characterise the Great Litchfield Down and Willesley Warren Character Area. The southern extent is defined by the Test and Bourne valleys, with the boundary following the West of England railway line as a clearly identifiable feature. The western boundary is defined by the more enclosed farmland and woodland of the Ashmansworth and Binley Down Character Area. The Character Area is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

This landscape is underlain with chalk beds, which are masked in places with areas of clay with flint deposits. Dry valleys with alluvial deposits dissect the area and, together with the surrounding geology pattern, create a distinctly undulating landform. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. After this time only limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. There is evidence of Iron Age and Roman activity (including the line of the Portway Roman road to Andover) in the Character Area (Hampshire SMR). Medieval open



field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure, mainly by informal means, during the 17th-18th centuries.

### Overall Landscape Character

This is an undulating landscape of varied scale and enclosure, unified by the mosaic of farmland and woodland that covers the area. The fields are predominantly arable and large-scale, bounded by a strong hedgerow structure which, interspersed with the frequent woodland blocks and shelter-belts, create a semi-enclosed landscape. An area of more open arable farmland exists in the south-west of the area, adjacent to Hurstbourne Park, where woodland blocks are less frequent and hedgerows are low and well trimmed. Isolated farmsteads, villages and hamlets are scattered throughout this landscape, interconnected by a network of winding roads. Overall it retains a quiet, rural character. The only urban influences (apart from a major pylon line that diagonally crosses the landscape) are in the far south of the area where it adjoins the settlement of Whitchurch, and alongside the A34 dual carriageway (the main road corridor which bisects the area from north to south).

### Litchfield Down Key Characteristics

- Rolling chalkland, falling towards the River Test and Bourne Rivulet in the south, with a discernible sense of place, strengthened by its unifying pattern of large woodland blocks and hedgerow network;
- Patchwork of arable fields interspersed with woodland blocks and shelter belts, creating a semi-enclosed landscape. One area of contrast exists to the south-west with more open, arable fields and low, trimmed hedgerows;
- Lies within North Wessex Downs AONB and generally possesses an unspoilt, remote, quiet and rural character, with few detracting influences. An exception is within the vicinity of the A34, which cuts through the area north-south, bringing noise intrusion and limiting east-west movement;
- Generally large-scale fields, predominantly reflecting 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure and, in the west (where there are large wavy-edged fields), 17th and 18th century informal enclosure, enclosed within a relatively strong hedgerow structure;
- Fields bounded by tracks and roads, resulting from post-medieval informal enclosure;
- Examples of scarce habitat types, especially small fragments of unimproved chalk grassland (mainly associated with roadside verges along the A34) and a number of large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland to the north and west of the area;
- Moderate to low intervisibility within the area, confined by the woodland and hedgerow structure. More extensive views within the more open, south-western section of the landscape, with occasional views over the Bourne Valley to the south;
- Isolated farmsteads and hamlets scattered throughout the area interconnected by narrow, winding roads, and the small village of Litchfield near the south-bound A34 junction;
- Three Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including a length of Roman road, barrows and Egbury Camp. The route of the Portway Roman Road and adjacent wide linear tree belt cross diagonally through the area;
- There is a loose network of public rights of way, but some areas of farmland, in particular to the east of Cole Henley, have limited public access. There is no Open Access Land within the Character Area.

### Key Issues

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Weaker landscape structure, particularly in the more open landscape types to the south of the area, resulting from hedgerow removal and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, particularly in the more open landscape types, and retention of tree saplings in hedgerows;
- Management of road verges and hedge banks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved grassland, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Loss of biodiversity through intensive farming practices;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Localised intrusion of traffic on the A34, and of major pylon line that crosses the landscape.

### GUIDANCE

#### Litchfield Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Litchfield Down Character Area is to conserve the overall rural pattern of farmland and woodland with limited settlement, and limit increases in urbanisation through incongruous development. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and the variety of woodland. The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan should also be taken into account to conserve and enhance the landscape within the AONB.

#### Landscape Guidelines

##### Land Management

- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, but in particular towards the more open south-western part of the area;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as hedgerows and woodlands;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns and woodlands. Conserve historic elements of the landscape;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the landscape and land management key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- Maintenance and, where possible, extension of chalk grassland habitat (such as those associated with roadside verges along the A34);
- Conserving and enhancing the remote, secluded and relatively undeveloped character of more enclosed and intimate landscapes, including the character of the lanes;
- The need for appropriate woodland management, including the viable use of timber products, particularly for fuel; Encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes, husbandry and ecology and ensuring future veteran tree succession;
- Scope for more and better management of woodland in the AONB, especially smaller woods, to improve habitat for wildlife and provide an economic return.

##### Built Development

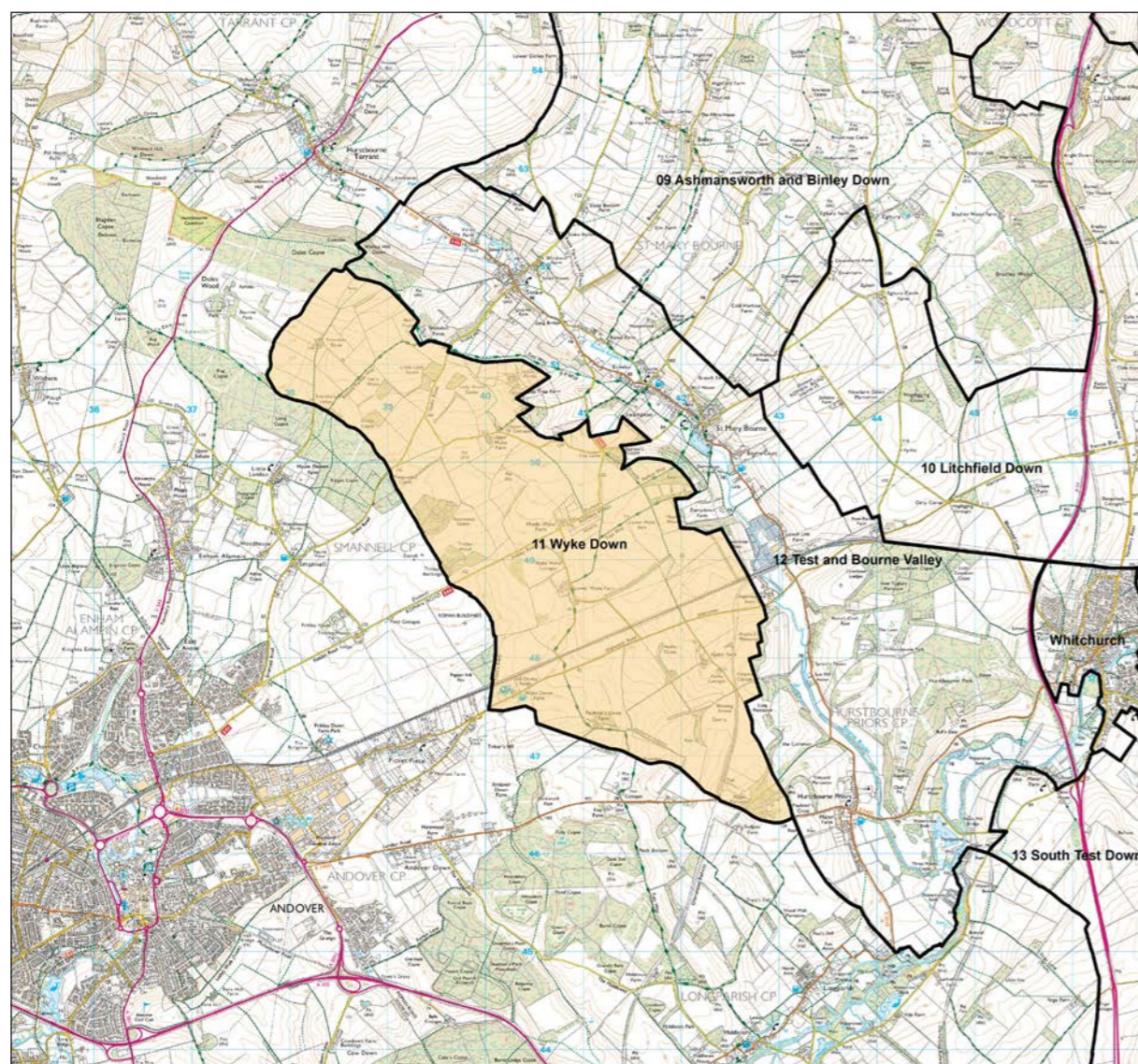
- Retain the rural character of the area, limiting inappropriate urbanisation;
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials.

The Character Area is within the AONB, and therefore should be considered with regard to the development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those concerning:

- New large free-standing dwellings as replacement dwellings in the open countryside;
- Good design of new development, sited within, or on the edge of, existing settlements and avoiding exposed locations;
- The loss of rural character through suburbanising influences from new development (new fencing, lighting, signage, parking areas, paved footpaths, loss of native hedgerows and creation of new garden areas);
- Impact on dark skies and tranquillity of high-powered external lighting, especially where poorly

- directed or in an exposed location (not usually subject to planning control);
- Potential for certain forms of development to intrude on the wider landscape, including masts, pylons, wind turbine developments, photovoltaic schemes, and minerals and waste schemes, threatening the senses of remoteness and tranquillity, and landscape quality and heritage assets;
  - Development that results in a material loss of tranquillity and/or impact on the dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs or its setting;
  - Impact of road signage, street lighting and other highway clutter on landscape character, including within settlements. Measures which have an urbanising effect on AONB character and are thus generally inappropriate include: oversized, multiple and yellow backed road signs; new street lighting in previously unlit locations; lighting that allows spillage or glare; road markings; concrete kerbing; illuminated bollards; fencing; and elaborate traffic-calming schemes.

## CHARACTER AREA 11: WYKE DOWN



### Location and Boundaries

This small, gently undulating area lies in the west of the Borough, bounded to the north-west, west and south by the Borough boundary, although its character does extend beyond. The north-east and eastern boundaries are defined by the distinctive Test and Bourne valley marking a change in topography and vegetation characteristics. The majority of the Character Area is within the North Wessex Downs AONB, the exception being an area south of Walworth Road.

### Formative Influences

This gently undulating landscape is predominantly underlain with chalk beds, which merge with a relatively open clay plateau on higher ground to the north-west. The area gently slopes to the south-west, away from the Bourne Rivulet, linking it primarily with the Andover area outside the Borough boundary. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age) when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. After this time only very limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. There is some evidence for earlier prehistoric activity in the Character Area, including extant monuments, and also for Iron Age and Roman activity (Hampshire SMR). The prehistoric track known as the Harrow Way passes through this Character Area, as does the line of the Portway Roman road to Andover. Medieval open



field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th - 18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.

### Overall Landscape Character

This is a consistent landscape, characterised by a medium to large-scale mosaic of arable farmland and small broadleaved woodland blocks. This structure of woodland, together with the relatively strong hedgerows that bound the fields, creates a feeling of semi-enclosure. The clay plateau landscape to the north-west of the area merges into the lower lying chalkland, unified by the gently undulating, south-west sloping landform. The landscape displays a sparse settlement pattern, with isolated farmsteads and hamlets scattered through the area. Its distance from major settlements has helped to ensure that it remains distinctly rural, quiet and unspoilt.



### Wyke Down Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landscape of rolling chalkland and a unifying pattern of large woodland blocks, lending a discernible sense of place;
- Medium to large-scale mosaic of arable farmland with a semi-enclosed or enclosed character, resulting from small broadleaved woodland blocks and relatively strong hedgerow structure with hedgerow trees;
- Area lies within North Wessex Downs AONB, except south of Walworth Road. A line of pylons runs diagonally through the southern extent of the AONB, however there are few other detracting influences, and the majority of the Character Area has a remote, quiet, rural character, particularly to the north;
- Medium to large-scale farmland, the mix of parliamentary fields, track-bound fields and large wavy-edged fields indicating historic time-depth;
- Small fragments of ecologically valuable woodland habitat;
- Moderate intervisibility within the area, although often confined by woodland blocks, strong hedgerow structure and hedgerow trees;
- Sparse settlement pattern with isolated farmsteads and hamlets scattered through the area, such as Middle Wyke Farm and cottages (located towards the centre of the Character Area), many accessed by relatively straight, narrow roads enclosed by tall hedge banks, running south-west to north-east;
- The West of England railway line passes through the southern portion of the area, partially in cutting. The railway is marked by lineside trees and vegetation, as is the now overgrown route of the dismantled Fullerton to Hurstbourne railway line which passes through the south-eastern most end of the Character Area;
- Public Rights of Way include sections of the Brenda Parker Way and Test Way Long Distance Paths, although some areas have limited public access, including west of Middle Wyke Farm, and south-east of Walworth Road;
- Devil's Ditch (SM 26791) in St Mary Bourne parish.

### Key Issues

- Under management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Some areas of weaker landscape structure, resulting from hedgerow removal or fragmentation, and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of tree saplings;
- Management of road verges and hedge banks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Decline in extent of chalk grassland and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Loss of biodiversity through intensive farming practices;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Visual intrusion of major pylon line, which cuts diagonally across the area.

## GUIDANCE

### Wyke Down Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Wyke Down Character Area is to maintain the mosaic of rural farmland and woodland and to limit increases in urbanisation. Opportunities for enhancement include improved management of woodland and the hedgerow network. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, the siting of new development, and intrusion from certain types of development.

### Landscape Guidelines

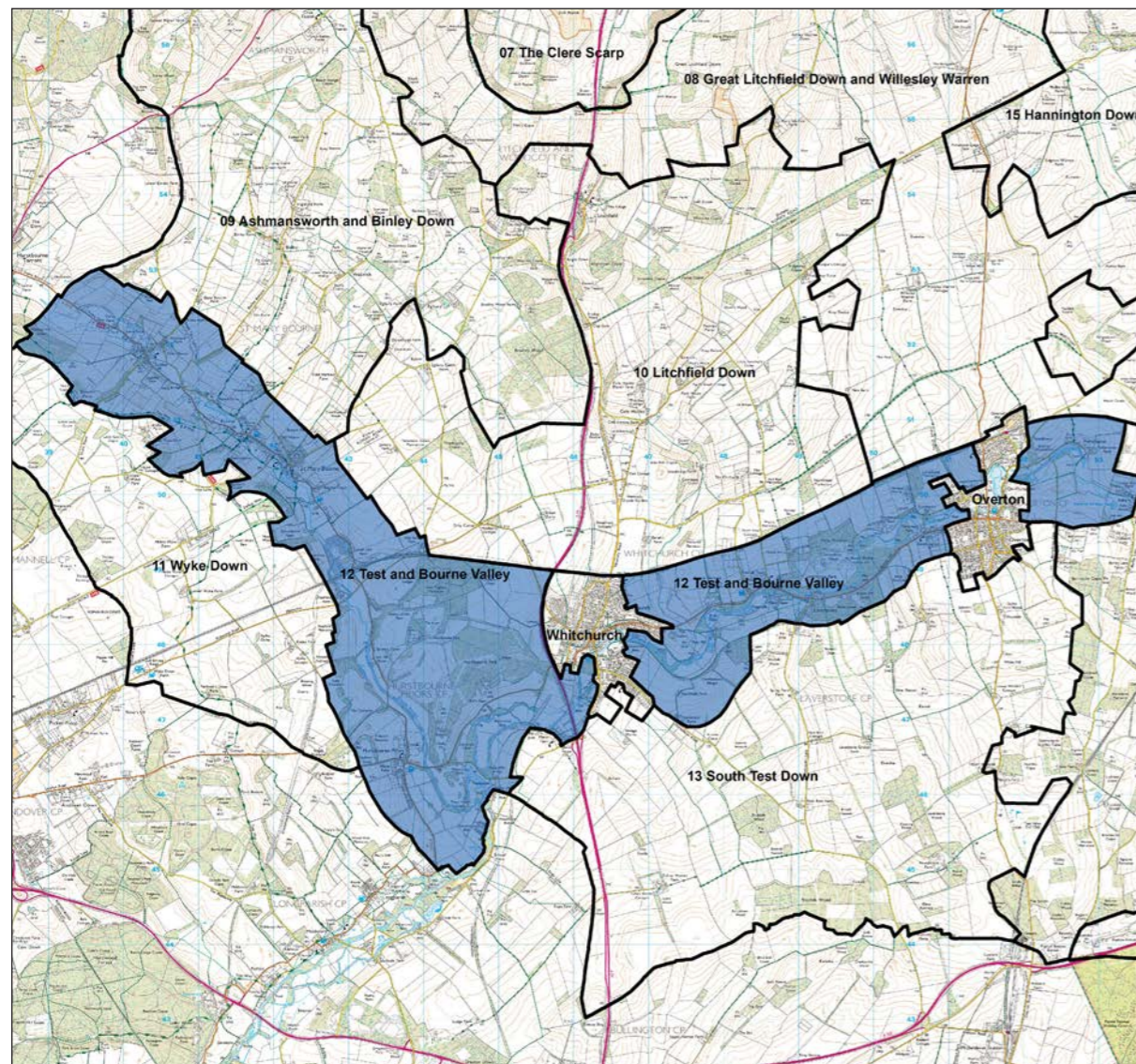
#### Land Management

- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value. In particular, improve the management of the ancient semi-natural woodland located within the Character Area;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows throughout the Character Area, but particularly within areas of weaker landscape structure towards the central and southern parts of the Character Area;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as hedgerows and woodlands;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns and woodlands;
- Conserve historic elements of the landscape;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

#### Built Development

- Retain the rural character of the area, maintaining the sparsely settled character of Wyke Down.
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline;
- Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.

## CHARACTER AREA 12: TEST AND BOURNE VALLEY



### Location and Boundaries

The Test and Bourne rivers form a distinct Character Area within the south-western section of the Borough. The Character Area embraces the rivers' floodplain and valley sides, which unify and define the Character Area boundary. The central southern boundary is marked by the Borough boundary, although the Character Area extends beyond this into the neighbouring Test Valley Borough. The settlements of Whitchurch and Overton divide the Character Area into three portions. The majority of western portion, to the west of Whitchurch, is within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

The Test and Bourne rivers cut through an underlying geology of predominantly chalk beds with small areas of clay deposits on higher ground, giving rise to the distinct flat valley floors and abrupt rising valley sides characteristic of this area. The alluvial, loam and valley gravels deposited by the rivers result in a change in vegetation characteristics from that of the surrounding chalkland. The present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable, agriculture and grazing. After this time only very limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. The area includes the medieval settlements of Overton and Whitchurch, both of which are referred to in the Domesday survey of 1086, as were

Polhampton, Freefolk, Laverstoke, Tufton and Hurstbourne Priors. Southington also appears to have been a medieval settlement. Occupants of the valley settlements almost certainly exploited the chalk downland on the valley sides for agriculture and to provide grazing for their stock. This is reflected in the shape of the parishes. Medieval open field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This mixed area of valley floor, slopes, parkland and built form, is unified by the distinct landform which forms the Test and Bourne valley system. The floodplain is predominantly under pasture with a high proportion of linear woodlands and copses, typically of willow and alder, creating a relatively enclosed, intimate and textured landscape. Where the Bourne and Test converge to the south of Whitchurch, they begin to meander across a widening valley with shallower sides. The valley sides have a mosaic of pasture and arable farmland interspersed with small woodland blocks, the fields bounded by a strong hedgerow structure and hedgerow trees. The slopes of the Bourne valley are generally semi-enclosed, with those of the River Test slightly more open. Parkland forms an important element within the Test Valley, with Hurstbourne Park and Laverstoke Park containing mature specimen trees and managed woodland on the valley sides. Settlement density is fairly high within this Character Area, particularly along the Test Valley, with towns, villages and hamlets developing along the lower valley sides and valley floor.

### Test and Bourne Key Characteristics

- Two distinct river valleys, merging south-west of Whitchurch, with flat floors, abrupt sloping valley sides and a strong sense of place;
- Narrow valley floors, dominated by pasture, with linear woodland belts in upper reaches and with a distinctive riparian vegetation and pastoral character, widening south-west of Whitchurch and developing a more open character;
- Patchwork of predominantly medium to large-scale parliamentary fields, with intact hedgerows under mixed farmland, and with small woodland blocks along valley sides;
- Area west of Whitchurch lies predominantly within the North Wessex Downs AONB, generally possessing an unspoilt, intimate character, with limited intrusion from people, traffic and noise. A sense of remoteness pervades some of the less accessible parts of the river valley;
- Semi-enclosed nature to the 17th-18th century informally enclosed ladder fields, and small wavy-fields on the slopes of the Bourne, due to their strong hedgerow and tree structure, in contrast to the slightly more open slopes of the Test;
- Valuable aquatic and wetland habitats along the river valleys (the whole of the Test being an SSSI and Environmentally Sensitive Area), including East Aston Common (SSSI), supporting extensive fen communities and riparian habitats associated with one of Britain's finest chalk stream systems;
- Areas of water meadow and unimproved grassland habitats, including Bere Mill Meadows (SSSI), a damp, unimproved herb-rich neutral grassland in the Upper Test Valley;
- Watercourses utilised for low key traditional industry, in particular watercress growing, with a number of watercress beds, including along the Bourne at Lower Link Farm (south-east of St Mary Bourne), and between Hurstbourne Priors and Tufton, and along the Test to the east of Whitchurch;
- Scattered remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland along the valley sides, the larger examples associated with parkland;
- Nationally important historic parklands including the Grade II Hurstbourne Park and Grade II\* Laverstoke Park, contributing a well-managed character to the landscape;
- Intervisibility varying with location, minimised significantly by vegetation and landform within the valley floor and lower slopes, with more open views across the valley system obtainable from higher ground;
- Fairly high settlement density, particularly along the Test valley, with towns, villages and hamlets developing along the lower valley sides and valley floor. Although bringing an urbanised character in places, the majority of settlement consists of attractive traditional villages, and there are extensive Conservation Areas and numerous listed buildings along the length of the river valleys, including St Mary Bourne, Hurstbourne Priors, Tufton, Whitchurch, Laverstock and Freefolk, and Overton Conservation Areas;
- Main routes through the landscape running along the lower valley slopes and valley floor, except for the A34 dual carriageway that crosses the Test Valley;
- Traditional buildings associated with the rivers, such as weirs and numerous mills, including former saw mills and paper mills. Historic river crossings, including stone bridges, and pedestrian footbridges, forming key locations in the landscape with cultural significance. Small disused quarry pits;
- The West of England railway line runs along the northern boundary of the Character Area, and crosses over the Bourne valley on a large brick viaduct to the south of St Mary Bourne;

- Various Public Rights of Way, including parts of the Brenda Parker Way and Test Way Long Distance Paths, cross the valleys and link to settlements. However, there is limited public access to watercourses, in particular around Hurstbourne Park and Laverstoke Park. However, where footpaths allow an experience of watercourses, there is a keen sense of peace and tranquillity, such as along enclosed stretches of the Test;
- The Character Area provides part of the rural setting to the adjoining medieval settlements of Overton and Whitchurch, and their Conservation Areas.

### Key Issues

- Identification and conservation of all water meadows, and their appropriate management to allow for shallow winter flooding;
- Management of floodplain grazing marsh, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Eastwards movement of source of River Test due to flooding;
- Maintenance of water quality and flows;
- Decline in watercress beds due to lack of maintenance of historic disused beds;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips next to the Test and Bourne rivers and tributaries and other sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Poor species and structural diversity and ecological value within coniferous plantations;
- Loss of broadleaf woodlands;
- Loss and fragmentation of hedgerows, particularly in the more open parts of the valley sides and floor;
- Management of hedgerows (particularly in the more open areas) and field patterns of historic importance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Some adverse impacts of low-intensity management of grasslands, particularly where under horse grazing (eg rank grassland with weeds, poorly-managed boundaries or inappropriate styles of fencing);
- Loss, fragmentation and inappropriate management of unimproved, and semi-improved, neutral and calcareous grassland;
- Some localised visual intrusion and noise from built development and roads within the river corridor, and from the A34 dual carriageway, which crosses the Test Valley;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Whitchurch and Overton, encroaching into the Character Area.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Test and Bourne Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Test and Bourne Valley Character Area is to conserve the rural, secluded areas of landscape with its watercourses, pastures, woodland and copses, along with the pattern of traditional settlement and historic infrastructure and buildings associated with the watercourses. Opportunities for enhancement include the management of the pastures, woodlands, willows and alders associated with the river corridors. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to watercourses and adjacent landscapes, dark skies, siting of new development, and intrusion from certain types of development.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

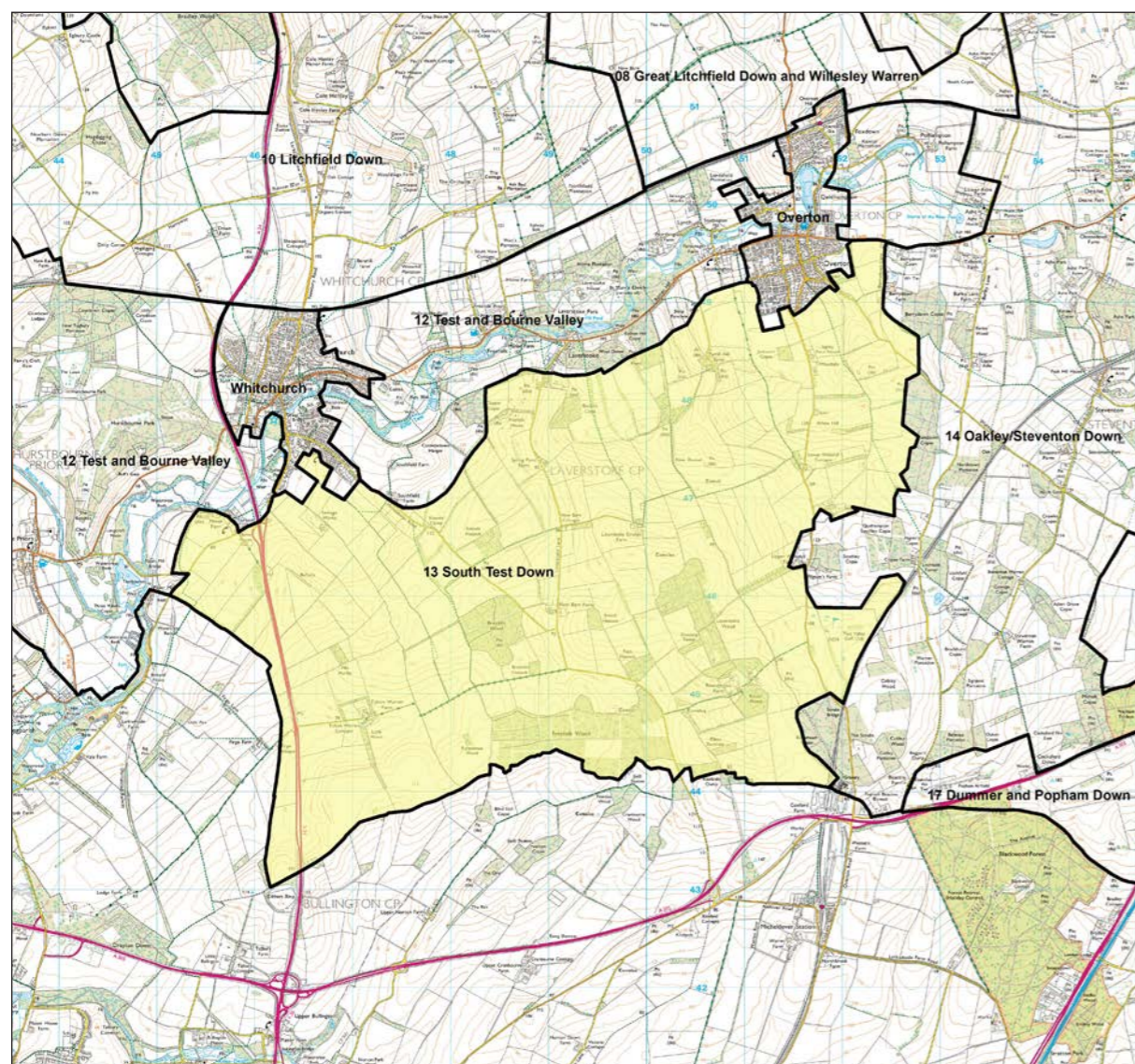
#### ***Land Management***

- Conserve and enhance the waterside meadows and pastures, and resist the improvement of grasslands and drainage schemes which could disturb the characteristic landcover, vegetation or adversely affect ecological value;
- Enhance management of non-commercial watercress beds to restore and conserve this important historic feature of the chalk watercourses;
- Promote strategies for the Test and Bourne floodplains which maintain the traditional settlement limiting adverse effect of inappropriate increases in development;
- Conserve, enhance and restore riparian woodland, the stock of individual field and riverbank trees including willow and alder, and the blocks and linear bands of woodland;
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques with local landowners and the farming community;
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands and the use of locally appropriate species such as willows, alder and oak trees;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows throughout the Character Area, but particularly within more open parts of the valley sides and floor where the hedgerow network is fragmented, with the use of chalk-loving species such as dogwood, wayfaring tree, spindle, privet, field maple and hazel.
- Seek to enhance opportunities for public engagement and understanding of the waterways through footpath links to the waters edge from existing Public Rights of Way, employing appropriate surfacing, materials and signage;
- Seek appropriate siting of facilities and new access links for leisure and tourism through visitor management to support appropriate levels of circulation and movement patterns of different user groups;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques, to conserve and enhance key landscape features such as relatively small-scale irregular field pattern, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, waterside willows and alders, watercress beds and other wetlands;
- Encourage conservation of historic landscape pattern of meadows and waterways, and understanding of underlying archaeology.

### ***Built Development***

- Retain the distinct individual villages and hamlets, avoiding expansion along the B3048 or B3400 with ribbon development which lead to a loss of separate settlement identity;
- Ensure any new development is sensitively sited in association with existing settlement, taking into account views from the wider area, and designed with scale, form and detailing, including materials, which conserve the historic character of the settlements and their setting;
- Retain natural buffers and boundaries to settlement where possible, including existing hedgerows and trees, and promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Retain the largely undisturbed, peaceful nature of areas away from settlement;
- Promote appropriate scale and form of boundary treatment to avoid adverse visual impact of inappropriate boundaries on the rural character of the river valleys;
- Conserve the rural roads and small bridges minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network or bridges which would change their character;
- Limit urbanisation of roads through encouraging appropriate surfacing of existing pavements, enhancing the immediate landscape setting and ensuring minimum clutter;
- Promote the use of traditional or rural signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.

## CHARACTER AREA 13: SOUTH TEST DOWN



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### Location and Boundaries

This gently undulating, open arable landscape lies in the south-west of the Borough, bounded to the south and west by the Borough boundary. Its northern boundary is defined by the abrupt valley sides of the River Test, which marks a change in topography and vegetation characteristics. The eastern boundary signals a transition to the more enclosed patchwork of arable farmland and woodland, and greater amounts of settlement, of the Oakley/Steventon Down Character Area.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain with chalk layers and occasional deposits of clay with flint on higher ground, creating a gently undulating landform. Dry valleys cut into the landscape from the north, creating a slightly more rolling landscape within the northern reaches. Although there is relatively little modern settlement in this Character Area, evidence of human activity in the form of extant monuments, goes back to the prehistoric period. The formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. After this time only very limited patches of woodland survived or regenerated. There is considerable evidence for Bronze Age activity, including extant barrows, in the Character Area (Hampshire SMR). There are also more limited indications of Iron Age and Roman

activity. Medieval open field systems, related to settlements located in the Test-Bourne valley and downland, were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and by some parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This area has two distinct landscape types which creates some diversity within the overall Character Area. The eastern and western parts are characterised by large, arable fields with low, well-cut hedgerows and limited woodland cover. This creates an open, uniform landscape, despite the presence of hedgerows and geometric shelter-belts. This large, open patchwork merges with an area of semi-enclosed arable fields in the centre of the South Test Downs. This more enclosed area has a higher frequency of woodland blocks and shelter-belt planting, with a slightly stronger hedgerow structure, although fields maintain a large scale. The Character Area, as a whole, is unified by topography, the network of hedges which bound the large scale fields, and limited amounts of settlement, and is distinct from the more enclosed landscape to the north and east. The sparse settlement pattern within the area, consists of only a small number of isolated farmsteads and other scattered properties, typically accessed via narrow roads. Whilst much of the landscape remains peaceful and unspoilt, the A34 disturbs the western edge of the area through which it crosses from north to south.

### South Test Down Key Characteristics

- Rolling chalkland and pattern of large woodland blocks, including the ancient woodlands of Brick Kiln Wood, Freefolk Wood and Laverstoke Wood, giving a discernible sense of place. Its gently undulating topography and degree of diversity contrasts with adjacent Character Areas;
- Pattern of farmland, woodland, hedgerows and trees;
- Generally unspoilt, rural character, but occasional detracting influences from built development and, on the western edge, visual and noise intrusion from the A34;
- Large open arable fields (reflecting late 18th-19th century parliamentary enclosure) adjacent to the A34, bounded by low, insignificant hedgerows and infrequent woodland blocks, and with geometric shelterbelts;
- Semi-enclosed arable land (comprising both parliamentary fields and ladder fields) in the centre of the area between Brickkiln Wood and Laverstoke Wood (and, south of Overton, large wavy fields) with more woodland blocks and tree-lined hedgerows. Area opens up around White Hill creating a general overall open character;
- Examples of valuable habitat types, especially several large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, mainly assarted on the southern edge;
- Generally high intervisibility within the area, and occasional views down to the Test Valley and Overton, although woodland and undulating landform inhibits views from certain locations;
- Sparse settlement pattern, with only a small number of isolated farmsteads/properties, such as Tufton Warren Farm and Cottages in the south-west corner of the Character Area, scattered through the area and accessed along narrow, relatively direct, roads with varying degrees of enclosure provided by roadside hedge banks;
- Some areas, such as the western end of the Character Area, and north of Roundwood Farm to the east, have limited public access. Elsewhere however, Public Rights of Way cover considerable distances, where the large scale landscape with limited detracting influences, provides walkers with a peaceful sense of remoteness;
- The south-eastern extent of the Character Area includes a golf course, a relatively infrequent feature of the Borough, and abuts the South Western Main Line railway edged with scrub and trees;
- A number of Scheduled Bronze Age barrows in Overton parish.

- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Whitchurch and Overton, encroaching into the Character Area.

### GUIDANCE

#### South Test Down Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the South Test Down Character Area is to conserve the overall rural pattern of farmland and woodland with limited settlement, limiting increases in urbanisation. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and the variety of woodland.

#### Landscape Guidelines

##### Land Management

- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as hedgerows and woodlands, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;
- Conserve historic elements of the landscape, and raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the field patterns and woodlands;
- Conserve, enhance and restore woodlands across the Character Area, including improvements to ancient semi-natural woodlands, through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area generally, and in particular within more open areas to the west and east, including around White Hill;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

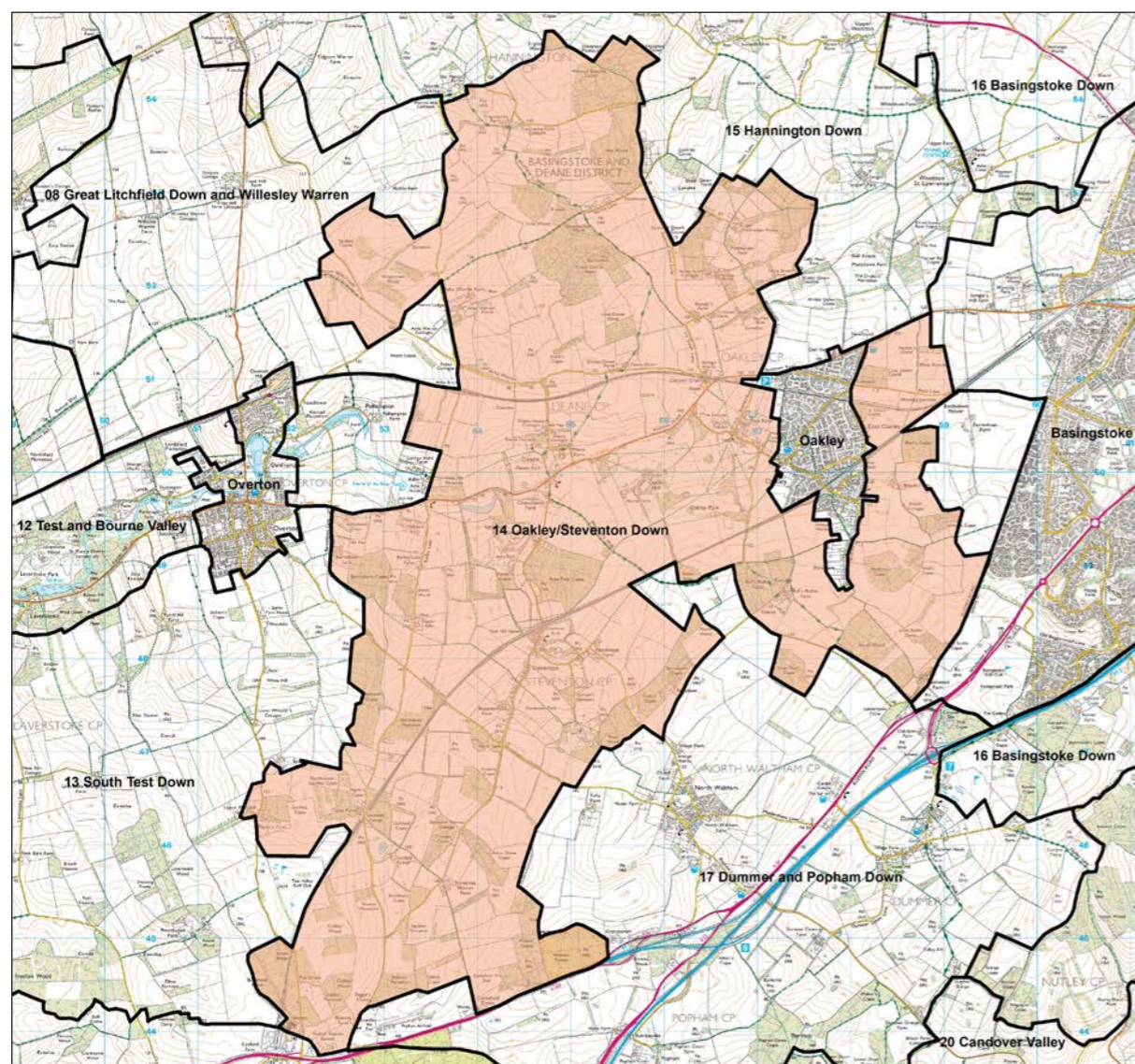
##### Built Development

- New development should be associated with existing settlement, for example at Whitchurch and Overton, in locations consistent with the existing settlement pattern and appropriate in terms of the surrounding landscape;
- Retain the sense of a rural, sparsely settled area by limiting adverse effects of increases in settlement, including development along the rural lanes;
- Avoid adverse visual effects on the rural setting to the River Test to the north.
- Encourage new built development to respond appropriately to the existing urban edges of Whitchurch and Overton, with retention of existing hedgerows and trees along the southern edges of these villages, and promote the use of appropriate species for potential planting and boundary treatments to integrate development into the adjoining rural landscape;
- Avoid visual intrusion from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context;
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

### Key Issues

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Weaker landscape structure in the more open landscape types to the west and east of the area, resulting from significant hedgerow removal or neglect and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows (particularly in more open areas), and field patterns of historical significance, and retention of tree saplings;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, with damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture primarily as a result of conversion to arable farmland;
- Loss of biodiversity due to intensive farming practices;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Localised noise and visual intrusion of traffic on the A34.

## CHARACTER AREA 14: OAKLEY/STEVENTON DOWN



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### Location and Boundaries

This large area forms a distinct swathe of relatively enclosed landscape within the centre south of the Borough, bounded on its southern edge by the Borough boundary. Its enclosed nature contrasts and defines its boundaries with the more open character of the South Test Downs, the Great Litchfield Down, and Willesley Warren Character Areas to the west, Hannington Down to the north, and Basingstoke Down and Dummer and Popham Down to the east.

### Formative Influences

This area, underlain by chalk beds, is covered by widespread deposits of clay with flints (particularly on higher ground) which creates the characteristic undulating landform. Land generally slopes from higher ground to the north and south of the area down to a dry valley that extends eastwards from the Test. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. After this time patches of woodland survived or regenerated. Prehistoric monuments exist in the Character Area, and the settlements of Deane, Oakley and Steventon are among those mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Clearance of woodland continued in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The medieval open field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is a diverse landscape, but comprises a consistent patchwork of medium to large-scale arable fields, interspersed with frequent broadleaf woodland blocks and managed parkland. The relatively enclosed nature created by the woodland distinguishes this area from the surrounding more open Character Areas. Fields are bounded by a strong structure of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, whilst mature specimen trees and managed landscapes are evident in the numerous parks within the area. Dispersed settlement is a characteristic of the area, with small villages and hamlets and scattered individual properties being linked by a network of narrow roads. The area, as a whole, retains a quiet, rural character, despite the varying presence of settlement.

### **Oakley/Steventon Down Key Characteristics**

- Rolling chalkland with unifying pattern of large woodland blocks, trees and hedgerows, giving a discernible sense of place;
- Mosaic of arable farmland, mixed woodland, and managed parkland, such as Oakley Park. The woodland brings semi-enclosure to much of the area and, where more extensive in the south, creates a more enclosed, intimate landscape;
- Unspoilt, rural and remote character, with limited intrusion from people, traffic and noise, the northern third of the area lying within the North Wessex Downs AONB;
- Generally medium to large-scale arable fields enclosed within a generally intact, well-managed hedgerow and woodland structure, the range of assarts, parliamentary fields and large wavy-edged fields reflecting enclosure from early medieval to 19th century times;
- Examples of valuable habitat types comprising frequent, sometimes large, scattered remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland, some of it assarted;
- Pre-1810 Ashe Park, Deane Park and Oakley Park bringing an ornamental and well-managed element to the landscape;
- Generally low to moderate intervisibility within the area, with frequent woodland blocks and strong hedgerow structure minimising long or panoramic views;
- Settlement within the Character Area is dispersed, often nestled into the landscape by surrounding tree cover, including small villages and hamlets such as Church Oakley, Steventon, and Deane, all of which are within Conservation Areas, and a number of small groups of dwellings and scattered individual properties, and occasional farmsteads. The Character Area surrounds the large village of Oakley, and partially helps to maintain the separate identity of Church Oakley from Oakley;
- Settlement is linked by a network of narrow lanes, frequently enclosed by hedge banks;
- The Wayfarer's Way Long Distance Path crosses through the north of the area, however some areas, particularly to the south of Steventon, have few Public Rights of Way, which limits access for walkers to the quiet, rural landscape;
- Both the West of England railway line and the South Western Main Line railway cross through the area. Although frequently in cutting, their routes are marked by line side vegetation including significant tree cover, and a number of bridges over and under the railways;
- Important archaeological features, including an Iron Age settlement and the Micheldever Spoil Heaps (SSSI), a site of quite exceptional botanical importance made from 19th century spoil heaps.

### **Key Issues**

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Some localised areas of comparatively weaker structure and a more open landscape, particularly to the north and east of the area, and resulting need to encourage hedgerow planting;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Loss of biodiversity through intensive farming practices;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Oakley, encroaching into the Character Area.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### **Oakley/Steventon Down Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Oakley/Steventon Down Character Area is to conserve the rural patchwork of arable fields, woodland and parkland whilst limiting increases in urbanisation through further development along the rural lanes, and maintaining the separate identity of settlements in the area. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies and intrusion from certain types of development.

#### **Landscape Guidelines**

##### ***Land Management***

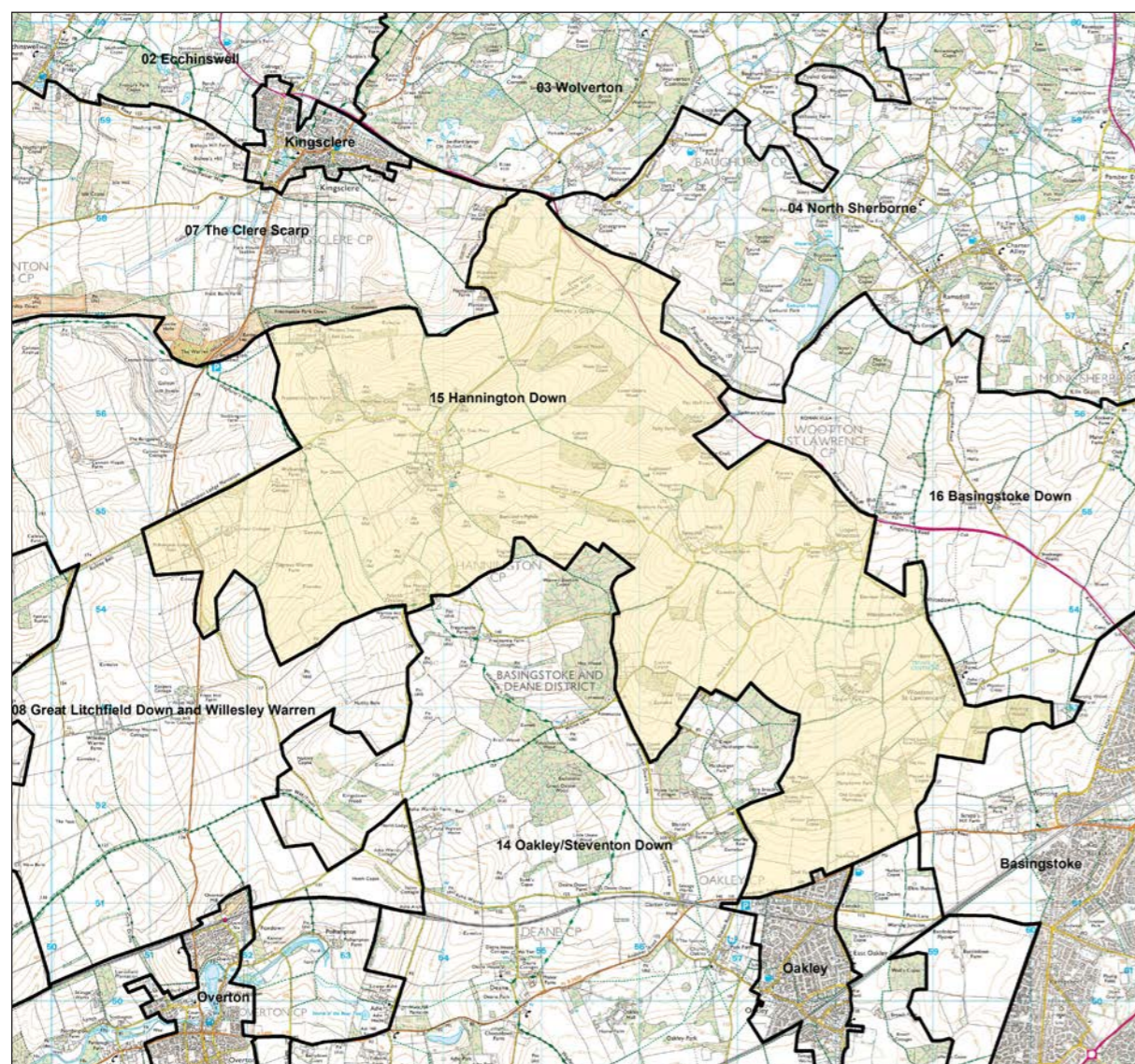
- Conserve, enhance and restore woodlands across the Character Area, including improvements to ancient semi-natural woodlands, through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area generally, and in particular within more open areas to the north and east of the Character Area;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the historic field patterns and woodlands.
- Conserve historic elements of the landscape, and encourage appropriately management of historic parkland landscape and maintain associated lodges and gateways;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows and woodlands, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.

##### ***Built Development***

- Retain the rural character of the area, avoiding adverse effects of expansion of settlement where possible, including development along rural lanes, and conserve existing historic settlements, including Deane and Steventon. Where possible limit effect of expansion of Oakley on the landscape and the separate identity of Church Oakley by retaining existing boundary hedges and trees in the area. The north-eastern extent of the Character Area also forms part of the separation between Oakley and Basingstoke, and woodland blocks and boundary vegetation should be retained and where possible enhanced, to help maintain the separate identity of Oakley from Basingstoke;
- Any new development should be associated with existing settlement, for example Oakley, where it would respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.



## CHARACTER AREA 15: HANNINGTON DOWN



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### Location and Boundaries

This undulating area of large-scale arable fields lies within the centre of the Borough. Its northern boundary is defined by the distinct change in geology and relief between the chalklands and the clay to the north. The western boundary marks a transition to the more open and exposed character of the Great Litchfield Down and Willesley Warren area and, to the east, the open arable landscapes of the Basingstoke Down Character Area. The southern boundary defines the more enclosed mosaic of woodland and farmland that distinguishes the Oakley/Steventon Down Character Area. The majority of the area is within the North Wessex Downs AONB, the exception being the southern-most parts of the Character Area.

### Formative Influences

The geology within this area consists of chalk beds covered with deposits of clay and flint. One large area of clay deposit to the north of the area has formed a high plateau from which the surrounding landform slopes. This creates a distinct and fairly steep landscape, becoming gentler to the south-east of the area. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing, although some patches of woodland survived or regenerated. The settlements of Hannington

and Wootton St Lawrence are among settlements mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, and a probable medieval settlement with fishponds exists at Cottington's Hill, north-west of Hannington. Medieval open field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This area is characterised by a mix of open and semi-enclosed farmland, woodland and parkland, unified by the distinct topography created by the high, open clay plateau at Hannington. Large-scale, arable fields predominate, bounded in the more open areas by low, weak hedgerows which become slightly stronger and denser in the semi-enclosed areas. The fields are interspersed with typically small woodland blocks, varying in frequency between the more open northern and western part of the area and the semi-enclosed eastern section. Well-managed and mature planting is characteristic within the parklands. Small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads are spread through the area, linked by a network of narrow, often winding roads. The area retains a quiet, rural character, unspoilt by major development or road corridors.

### **Hannington Down Key Characteristics**

- High open plateau in the north, from which surrounding landform slopes quite steeply, becoming gentler to the south-east;
- Pattern of open and semi-enclosed farmland with woodland blocks, hedgerows, trees and well-managed formal parkland;
- Lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB (except for south-eastern corner), generally possessing an unspoilt, rural character, with a sense of remoteness and limited intrusion from people, traffic and noise;
- Large, open arable fields bound by low hedgerows and infrequent woodland blocks to the north and east of Hannington and south of Ibworth, reflecting both 17th and 18th century informal enclosure and late 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure. Slightly greater enclosure on chalklands to the east, where hedgerow structure is stronger;
- Generally small woodland blocks, a limited amount assarted, varying in frequency between the two landscape types that this area encompasses;
- Examples of valuable habitat types, especially several blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, such as Dorrel Wood, and small remnants of unimproved calcareous grassland;
- Tangier Park and Manydown Park to the south add an ornamental and managed character to the surrounding farmland landscape;
- Intervisibility varying with location, with long, panoramic views from the open plateau at Hannington, but significantly reduced views in lower, more enclosed areas;
- Scattered small villages, including Hannington which is within a Conservation Area, hamlets, such as Ibworth, and farmsteads, linked by a network of narrow lanes, often winding and enclosed by roadside hedge banks. The Character Area also abuts the northern edge of the large village of Oakley;
- A network of Public Rights of Way, including part of the Wayfarer's Walk Long Distance Path, reaches most parts of the area, giving walkers a peaceful experience of the rural landscape.

### **Key Issues**

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Weaker landscape structure in the more open landscape types to the west of the area, and resulting need to encourage hedgerow planting;
- Management of hedgerows (particularly in large-scale open areas) and field patterns of historic importance, and retention of tree saplings;
- Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture, through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Management of road verges and hedge banks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Areas of intensive farming leading to a lowering of the biodiversity level;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips adjacent to sensitive wildlife areas;
- Some intrusion of roads on rural qualities of the landscape, such as the A339. Further intrusion from a major pylon line on very high ground north of Hannington, and landmark of radio mast at Cottington's Hill.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### **Hannington Down Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Hannington Down Character Area is to conserve the rural pattern of arable fields, woodland and parkland, and to limit inappropriate increases in urbanisation. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, siting of new development, and intrusion from certain types of development.

#### **Landscape Guidelines**

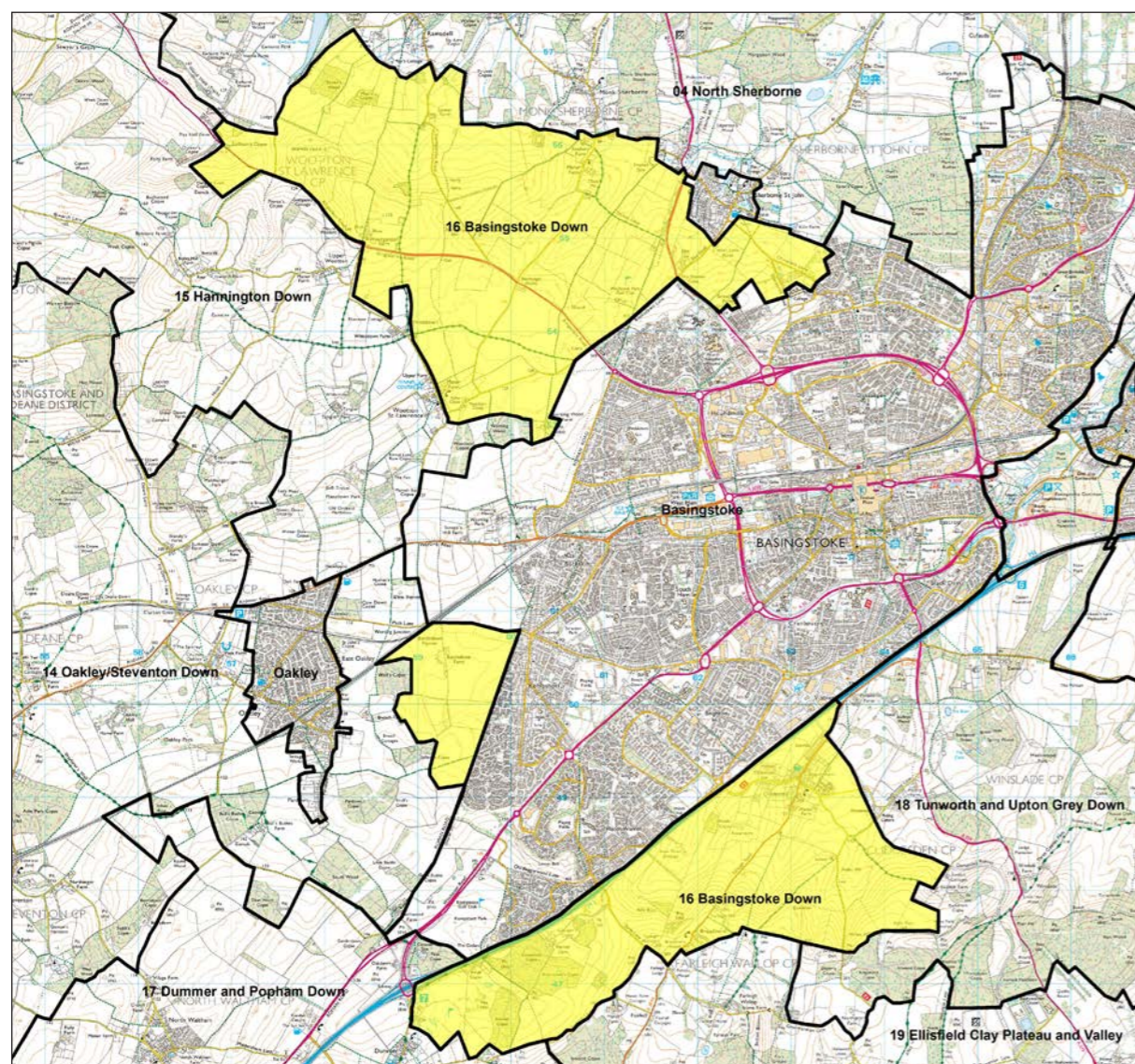
##### ***Land Management***

- Conserve, enhance and restore woodlands across the Character Area, including improvements to ancient semi-natural woodlands, through effective long term management and replanting to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows, across the Character Area generally, but in particular encourage hedgerow planting and restoration of hedges along historic field boundaries to enhance the hedgerow network in more open areas to the west of the area;
- Conserve historic elements of the landscape, and encourage appropriately management of historic parkland landscape and maintain associated lodges and gateways;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows and woodlands and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assarted field patterns and woodlands.
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.

##### ***Built Development***

- Ensure any new development is sensitively sited in association with existing settlement, taking into account views from the wider area, including views to and from the open plateau either side of Hannington;
- Any new development should be designed with scale, form and detailing, including materials, which conserve the historic character;
- Retain the rural character of the area, including along the lanes, and conserve existing historic settlements, such as Hannington. Where possible limit effect of expansion of Oakley on the landscape and the separate identity of Church Oakley by retaining existing boundary hedges and trees in the area. The north-eastern extent of the Character Area also forms part of the separation between Oakley and Basingstoke. Woodland blocks and boundary vegetation should be conserved and where possible enhanced, to help maintain the separate identity of Oakley from Basingstoke;
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

## CHARACTER AREA 16: BASINGSTOKE DOWN



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### Location and Boundaries

Recent development allocations and changes to the Settlement Policy Boundary around Worting, and Kempshott Park have split the Character Area into three main parts. This irregularly-shaped area lies in the centre of the Borough, taking its form from the settlement of Basingstoke, which defines its eastern boundary and, for a part to the south, its northern edge. Most of its northern boundary is defined by the distinct change in geology, relief and vegetation characteristics between chalkland and lowland mosaic landscapes. The western and southern boundaries mark a transition to a more enclosed mosaic of farmland and woodland characteristic to the surrounding Character Areas. The north-westernmost extent of the northern part of the Character Area, is within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Formative Influences

This area is underlain predominantly by chalk layers with occasional deposits of clay and flint. Erosion of the chalklands to the north of Basingstoke gives rise to a characteristic rolling landscape. This landform merges into a gentle rising slope to the south, which becomes steeper to the south of Basingstoke, rising to a high clay plateau at Farleigh Wallop. The present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing. A few patches of woodland survived or regenerated in the

north of the Character Area. The settlement of Worting is amongst those mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Medieval open field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is an area of relatively consistent landscape character, the urban form of Basingstoke creating a unifying element within a landscape of varying landform, which predominately falls to face Basingstoke. The area is characterised by a large-scale pattern of arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedges that have become weak and broken in places. These elements, together with the infrequent woodland blocks and small-scale woodland blocks, give a feeling of openness to the area. Urban influences, such as golf courses on the edge of Basingstoke, and main roads/motorway development, adversely affect the rural character of parts of the landscape. The major settlement of Basingstoke, and its associated infrastructure, exerts a strong urban influence on the character of the immediate surrounding landscape, affecting its rural character. In terms of settlement pattern, however, development outside Basingstoke is limited to a scattering of isolated farmsteads and small villages/hamlets.

### **Basingstoke Down Key Characteristics**

- Rolling landform to the north, becoming more undulating and northward sloping to the south to face Basingstoke;
- Predominantly large-scale farmland, lacking a distinctive sense of place;
- Provides landscape setting for the western and southern parts of Basingstoke, whilst the western quarter of the area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Urban influences affect much of the area, with Weybrook golf course to the north-west of Basingstoke, and Dummer golf course to the south-west of Basingstoke, and significant noise intrusion from the M3 motorway and A-roads;
- Open character formed by large-scale, arable fields, the mix of track-bound fields, large wavy-edged fields and parliamentary fields reflecting enclosure from post-medieval to 19th century times;
- Low, well-cut hedgerows and very few woodland blocks, although shelter belt planting exists north of Basingstoke, and very occasional remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland exists, especially concentrated in the south of the area;
- High intervisibility within the area due to the lack of woodland or strong hedgerow structure, enabling views of Basingstoke from many parts of the Character Area;
- The Character Area adjoins a number of settlements, including Basingstoke to the east, the village of Sherborne St John to the north-east, Monk Sherborne to the north-west, and the small village of Dummer to the south. The Character Area provides the setting to these settlements and the village Conservation Areas, and helps maintain the separate identities between each settlement. The fields around Battledown Farm within the middle part of the Character Area, also provide part of the separation between Basingstoke and Oakley to the west;
- There is limited settlement within the Character Area itself, the main exceptions being the village of Cliddesden, which is also within a Conservation Area, and hamlet of Broadmere to the east, and part of Wootton St Lawrence to the west. Elsewhere, there are scattered isolated farmsteads, linked by relatively small, narrow roads, contrasting with direct but intrusive road network linking Basingstoke with surrounding areas via the M3 and A-roads. Roman road defines the abrupt, straight, western built edge to Basingstoke, and the M3 corridor marks a similar sharp edge on the southern side;
- Public Rights of Way link Basingstoke to the surrounding countryside, and provide walkers with a sense of tranquillity within the AONB, but views of settlement on slopes facing Basingstoke limit the sense of remoteness;
- Various Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including Woodgarston ring motte, and a Roman site north-west of Woodgarston Farm, within the northern part of the Character Area, north-east of Upper Wootton.

- Intrusion of built development, urban land uses and major roads on the landscape;
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Basingstoke and Sherborne St John, encroaching into the Character Area.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### **Basingstoke Down Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Basingstoke Down Character Area is to maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland; limiting the effect of settlement expansion on the landscape and maintaining the separate identities of settlements where possible. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and policies set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, siting of new development and intrusion from certain types of development.

#### **Landscape Guidelines**

##### **Land Management**

- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their ecological value, including in particular areas of ancient semi-natural woodland such as Skyers Wood/Mays Copse to the north, and Rowley Copse, Kempshott/Shortwood Copse and Middle Copse to the south;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within extensive open areas, to enhance the hedgerow network;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows and woodlands, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners and conserve historic elements of the landscape;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

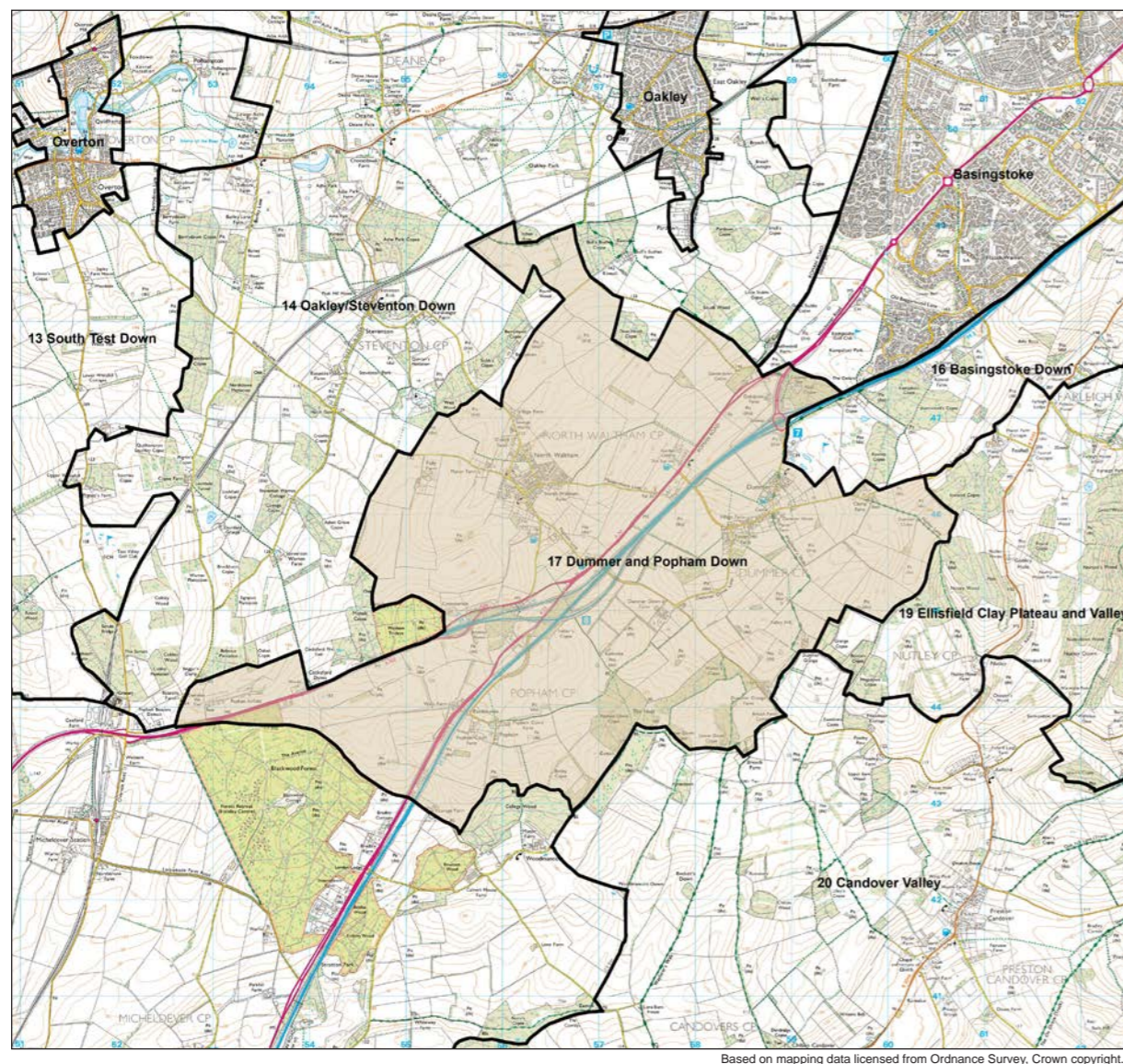
##### **Built Development**

- Carefully site new development, ensuring it is consistent with the pattern of existing settlement and limits inappropriate urbanisation of the landscape from expansion of built form, particularly on the edge of Basingstoke;
- Conserve existing historic settlements, and maintain the character of associated conservation areas, including Cliddesden;
- Limit the effect of development on the separate identities of Sherborne St John, Oakley and Basingstoke by retaining existing landscape structure including boundary hedges and trees in the area, to help to retain essential gaps between settlements;
- Encourage any new built development to use locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

### **Key Issues**

- Under-management of some ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Weakened hedgerow structure across the more extensive, open landscape types, resulting from previous hedgerow removal;
- Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Areas of intensive farming with low biodiversity levels;
- Management of grass field margins, road verges, hedgebanks, and uncultivated buffer strips adjacent to sensitive wildlife habitats to maintain or increase biodiversity;

## CHARACTER AREA 17: DUMMER AND POPHAM DOWN



### Location and Boundaries

This Character Area is located in the south of the Borough, bounded to the south-west by the Borough boundary. The western boundary marks the transition to the more enclosed, smaller scale landscape of Oakley/Steventon Down. The distinct Candover Valley and the more enclosed mosaic of farmland, woodland and parkland characteristic of the Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valley Character Area defines the extent of the south-eastern boundary. Dummer golf course and motorway junction in the Basingstoke Down Character Area demarcate the north eastern boundary.

### Formative Influences

The geology within this area predominantly consists of chalk layers, covered with occasional deposits of clay and flint. Erosion of the chalklands has led to the formation of an extensive dry valley, running south-west/north-east through the area and providing a unity and coherence to the Character Area. The present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing, although patches of woodland survived or regenerated. Evidence for prehistoric activity has survived in the form of extant barrows, and the Hampshire SMR shows evidence of Iron Age, Roman and (limited) Saxon activity in the area. The settlements of Dummer and Popham are amongst settlements mentioned



in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Medieval open field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.

### Overall Landscape Character

This is a varied landscape of open arable farmland, a more enclosed part around the road network and North Waltham, and an area of semi-enclosed arable fields, given coherence by the well-defined dry valley that runs through the area. The predominant large arable fields are bounded by low, trimmed hedgerows and infrequent woodland blocks, creating a feeling of relative openness. In contrast, the complexity of roads around the M3 motorway and A30/A303, especially at Junction 8, creates small pockets of land, with enclosure provided by the significantly greater percentage of woodland blocks. Tree planting also creates the small pocket of semi-enclosed farmland that lies to the north and west of Dummer Down Farm, to the south-west of Dummer. With the exception of the village of Dummer, this landscape is populated only by a number of scattered farmsteads, which are linked by a network of narrow lanes. The major road corridors of the M3 and A30/A303 significantly disturb the tranquillity of the landscape in adjoining areas.

### Dummer and Popham Down Key Characteristics

- Well defined dry valley running through, and unifying, the landscape;
- Varying landscape pattern comprising open farmland, semi-enclosed fields and road network;
- Some unspoilt areas, but others suffer significantly from the visual and noise intrusion of three major roads (M3, A30 and A303) which run through the valley. The road corridor is generally set down in the valley and its visual prominence lessens as distance from it increases, with the focus of views being rising ground on the opposite side of the valley, however traffic remains audible in the middle distance, particularly from high points such as to the south of Dummer, even in locations where the roads are not visible;
- Predominantly large-scale arable fields reflecting late 18th-19th century parliamentary enclosure and, through the northern large wavy-edged fields, 17th-18th century informal enclosure, bounded by low hedgerows and infrequent woodland blocks, creating an open character;
- Degree of enclosure created by woodland blocks close to the M3 and A30/A303 corridor, particularly at junction 8 where the complexity of the roads creates small pockets of land;
- Very occasional blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, such as Popham Down Copse and Walker's Copse to the south, contributing some ecological value;
- Varying intervisibility within the site, generally being high but impeded by woodland blocks and landform;
- Public Rights of Way, including part of the Wayfarer's Walk Long Distance Path, cross the area providing a peaceful experience away from the road corridor and particularly to the south, in and around woodland at The Holt. However, farmland to the west and north have limited public access;
- The village of North Waltham is located within the north-western half of the area and is a Conservation Area. The smaller village of Dummer is located to the east, and also has a Conservation Area. Elsewhere, there are scattered farmsteads and small groups of dwellings, such as at Popham, linked by a network of narrow lanes;
- Popham Beacons group of barrows, located in Overton parish on the southern edge of the Borough (SM 31151).

### Key Issues

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands and inappropriate infill planting;
- Weakened landscape structure across the more extensive, open landscape types, resulting from hedgerow removal or neglect and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows (particularly in more open areas) and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of tree saplings;
- Loss, fragmentation and inappropriate management of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins, including uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Intensive farming practices leading to a loss of biodiversity levels;
- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Visual and noise intrusion of major roads and other urban land uses on rural qualities of the landscape.

## GUIDANCE

### Dummer and Popham Down Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Dummer and Popham Down Character Area is to enhance the integrity of the hedgerow network and increase woodland cover where possible to help reduce the effect of the road corridor through the area, and to limit the effect of new development. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland.

### Landscape Guidelines

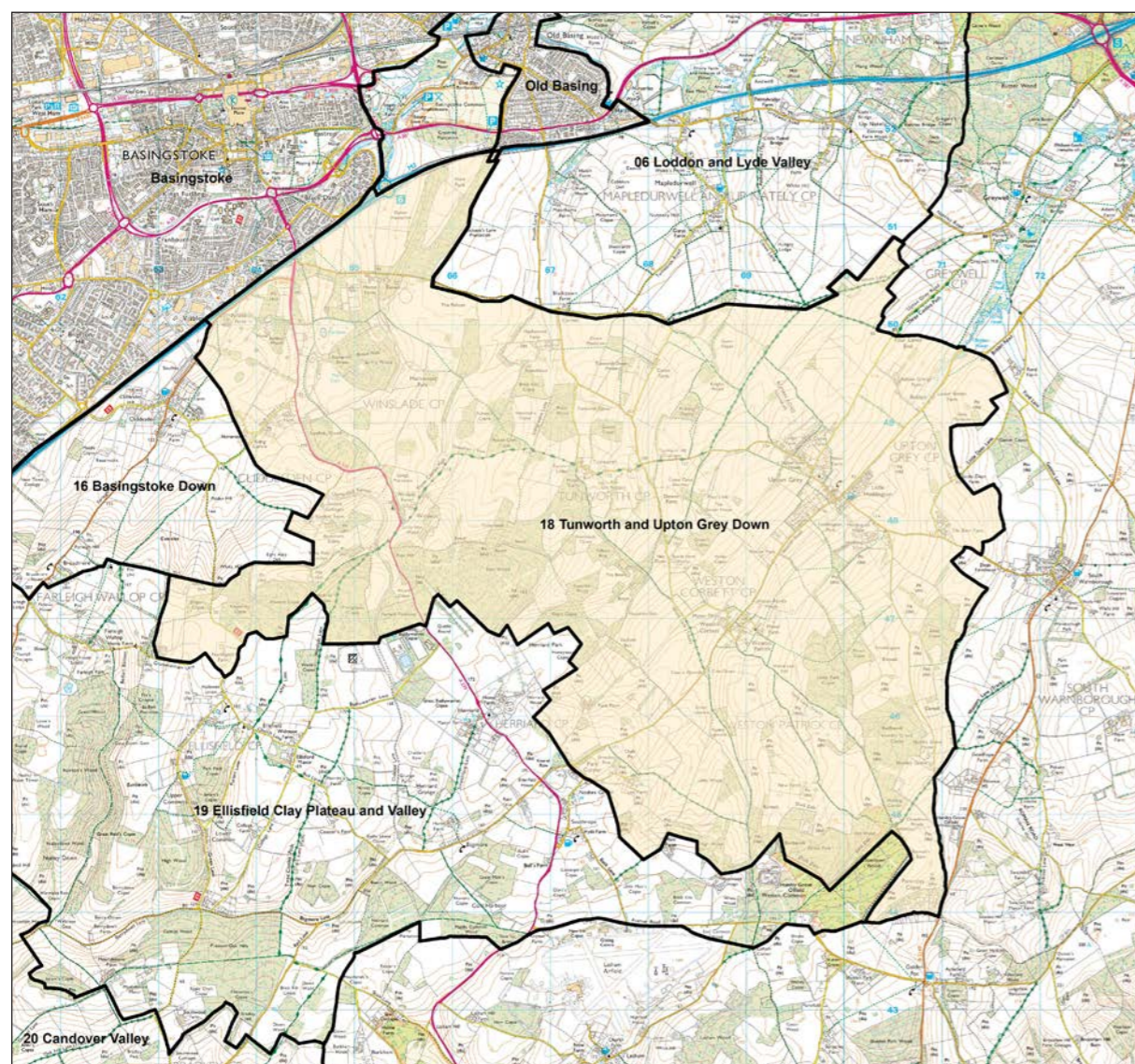
#### Land Management

- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their ecological value, including in particular areas of ancient semi-natural woodland such as Bramley Wood and Bittley Copse.
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within extensive open areas, to enhance the historic hedgerow network;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows and woodlands, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners and conserve historic elements of the landscape;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

#### Built Development

- Ensure new development is sensitively sited in association with existing settlement, to maintain the sparsely developed landscape character of the area.
- Retain the general rural character of the area, including avoiding adverse effects on the landscape from increases in settlement where possible, and conserve existing historic settlements, including North Waltham and Dummer;
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Limit adverse effects on landscape character and quality from further introduction of signage, gantries and lighting columns related to transport networks, and work to foster local distinctiveness where standard design criteria creates a lack of variation and 'urbanisation' of rural roads;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

## CHARACTER AREA 18: TUNWORTH AND UPTON GREY DOWN



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### Location and Boundaries

This area lies in the south-east of the Borough, bounded along its eastern edge by the Borough boundary. Its southern and south-western boundary marks a change in underlying geology, and relief to the flatter clay plateau of the Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valleys Character Area. The northern boundary is marked by the north facing slopes of the Loddon and Lyde valley system. The urban form of Basingstoke and the M3 motorway demarcate the northwestern boundary, while its western boundary defines the distinct change to the more open, arable landscape characteristic of the Basingstoke Down landscape.

### Formative Influences

The geology within this area predominantly consists of chalk layers, covered with very occasional and small deposits of clay and flint. Although undulating, the land generally slopes to the north-east from the high, flat clay plateau at Ellisfield, to the Loddon and Lyde and Whitewater valleys in the north and east. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing, although patches of woodland survived or regenerated. There was Iron Age and Roman activity in the area, and the settlements of Tunworth, Winslade, and Weston Patrick are among settlements mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Survey. Medieval open field systems and downland were largely

replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This diverse but coherent landscape comprises a patchwork of arable farmland, woodland and parks, unified by the undulating, sloping topography of numerous local valleys and ridges, between the high plateau of the Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valley Character Area to the south, and the large valley systems of the Loddon and Lyde Valley Character Area to the north. In the southern and western parts, fields are medium to large-scale with relatively large woodland blocks, and bound by strong hedgerows creating a feeling of semi-enclosure. This landscape merges in the north-east to one that is more open, with low, trimmed hedgerows and infrequent woodland blocks. Areas of parkland within the area contribute a managed character to the rural farmed landscape. Small villages, hamlets and isolated farmstead/properties are scattered through the area, linked by a winding network of narrow roads. Away from the north-western boundary with Basingstoke and the M3 and A339 through the west of the area, the landscape retains a peaceful, rural and unspoilt character.

### **Tunworth and Upton Grey Down Key Characteristics**

- Undulating landform, generally sloping north-eastwards from the Ellisfield Clay Plateau to the Loddon/Lyde and Whitewater valleys in the north;
- Unifying pattern of large woodland blocks, copses, roundels and individual trees, as well as intact well-managed hedgerows, creating a semi-enclosed landscape with a discernible sense of place. More open arable landscape with infrequent, small woodland blocks to the north-east of the area around Upton Grey;
- Generally quiet, unspoilt rural character, with a sense of remoteness and limited intrusion from people and traffic. The edge of Basingstoke adjacent to the north-west is largely obscured by vegetated mounding along the M3 motorway and blocks of woodland;
- Medium to large-scale arable fields comprising parliamentary fields, large wavy-edged fields and track bound fields, reflecting enclosure from post-medieval to 19th century times;
- Examples of valuable habitat types comprising scattered, large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, such as Hen Wood;
- A number of well-managed historic parks, Grade 1 Hackwood Park in the north being the largest. Other important parks include Great Park in the south-west corner of Weston Patrick parish, and the Grade II\* early 20th century garden at the Manor House, Upton Grey;
- Generally high intervisibility to the north-east of the area, becoming more confined with the increase in woodland cover and hedgerow structure;
- Scattered small villages and hamlets include Upton Grey, Weston Patrick and Tunworth, all of which have Conservation Areas and numerous listed buildings, and tend to lie within local valley features or on the valley sides rather than on the highest points in the landscape. There are also isolated farmstead/properties throughout the area, linked by a winding network of narrow roads;
- A network of Rights of Way, including part of the Three Castles Path Long Distance Path cover the area, although some areas to the west, such as Hen Wood, have limited public access;
- The route of the dismantled Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway is marked by overgrown vegetation as it winds through the western extent of the area;
- A line of pylons crosses broadly north-south through the eastern half of the Character Area;
- Important archaeological features including an earthwork in Great Park (SM 442).

### **Key Issues**

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands;
- Some localised areas of comparatively weaker structure and a more open landscape (particularly surrounding Upton Grey), resulting from hedgerow removal and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic value, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- The decline in extent of unimproved grassland through agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips adjacent to sensitive wildlife areas;

- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Noise intrusion from the M3 and A339, and visual intrusion of major pylon line that cuts from north to south through the area.
- Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Basingstoke, encroaching into the Character Area.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### **Tunworth and Upton Grey Down Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Tunworth and Upton Grey Down Character Area is to conserve the rural patchwork of arable fields, woodland and parkland whilst limiting inappropriate urbanisation. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland.

#### **Landscape Guidelines**

##### ***Land Management***

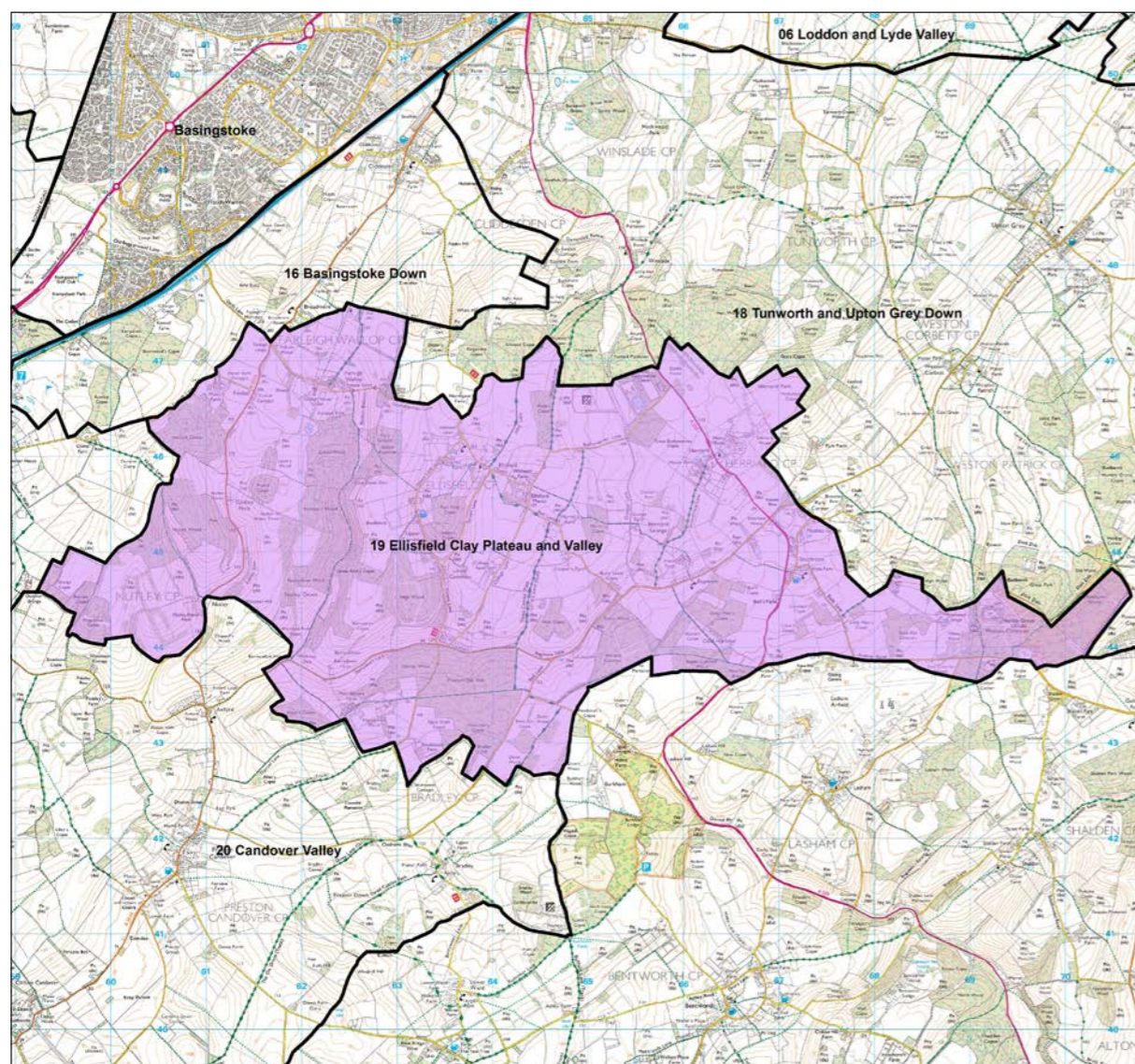
- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their ecological value, including in particular areas of ancient semi-natural woodland such as Kingsmoor Copse and Humbly Grove Copse, as well as smaller areas of woodland, such as Gaston Copse;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the historic field patterns, parkland and woodlands;
- Conserve historic elements of the landscape, and encourage appropriate management of historic parkland landscape and maintain associated lodges and gateways;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within more open landscape such as surrounding Upton Grey, to enhance the historic hedgerow network;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features, in particular hedgerows and woodland, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material, including metal park fencing where a local parkland character creates precedence.

##### ***Built Development***

- Conserve the rural character of the area, avoiding adverse effects of expansion of settlement where possible, including encouraging new built development to respond appropriately to the existing urban edge of Basingstoke, with retention of tree cover east of the M3;
- Conserve existing historic settlements, including Upton Grey, Weston Patrick and Tunworth;
- Encourage any new built development to respect locally distinctive settlement patterns, employ locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Avoid visual intrusion from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.



## CHARACTER AREA 19: ELLISFIELD CLAY PLATEAU AND VALLEYS



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### Location and Boundaries

This area lies in the south east of the Borough, bounded to the south-east by the Borough boundary. Its northern and eastern boundaries are defined by the more undulating and south-east sloping landform characteristic of the Tunworth and Upton Grey Down landscape. The south-western boundary marks a distinct transition to the Candover Valley landscape, whilst the north-west boundary is defined by the open, arable landscape associated with Basingstoke Down.

### Formative Influences

The plateau to the east of the area is underlain by a shallow deposit of clay and flint, which characterises its high elevation. Erosion to this clay deposit has led to a flat or gently undulating landform, which sets it apart from the surrounding chalkland. To the west of the area, erosion has worn away the majority of the clay deposit, resulting in a series of ridges and valleys above the chalk beds. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing, although patches of woodland survived or regenerated. There was Iron Age and Roman activity in the area, and the settlements of Herriard, Ellisfield, Farleigh Wallop and Nutley are among settlements mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Survey. Medieval open field systems were largely replaced by both informal and formal enclosure, the latter enforced by parliament in the late 18th/19th century.



### Overall Landscape Character

This landscape is characterised by a pattern of large-scale farmland, frequent woodland blocks and parkland. Diversity is created through variations in topography, but dense woodland blocks on the underlying clay, serves to unify the high plateau and valley slopes. Woodland cover throughout this area is generally high, creating a feeling of semi-enclosure, and the larger woodland blocks on some of the steep valley sides add to the dramatic valley landscape. Fields are predominantly arable, bounded by a strong hedgerow and tree structure, and parkland in the east of the area brings an ornamental, managed element to the landscape. The landscape is scattered with small villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads or properties, linked by a winding network of narrow roads. Both settlements and roads are often located in the bottom of valleys. The landscape retains a quiet, rural quality, unspoilt by major development, and has an intimate character within the valleys.

### Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valley Key Characteristics

- Flat to gently undulating clay plateau to the east of the area, merging to a distinct ridge and valley landscape to the west;
- Pattern of arable farmland, parkland and well-managed mixed woodland blocks. Relatively large blocks of the latter combine with topography to create an enclosed and intimate landscape with a distinct sense of place within the valleys;
- Generally quiet, unspoilt rural character, with a sense of remoteness and limited intrusion from people and traffic;
- Generally large-scale fields with intact boundaries, reflecting enclosure from post-medieval to 19th century times, the range of track-bound fields, large wavy-edged fields and parliamentary fields indicating historic time-depth;
- Examples of valuable habitat types comprising the scattered large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, much of it assarted;
- Localised ornamental, managed element contributed by the Grade II Herriard Park to the east and Grade II\* 20th Century Moundsmere Park to the south-west;
- Generally low intervisibility contained by the high proportion of woodland cover and strong hedgerow structure;
- Settlement includes the small dispersed village of Ellisfield, covered by a Conservation Area, towards the centre of the Character Area. Elsewhere there are scattered hamlets, such as Farleigh Wallop and Herriard, and linear groups of dwellings along lanes, including at Upper Common and Lower Common along Green Lane, and at Bagmore along Bagmore Lane, as well as isolated dwellings and farmsteads throughout the area. Settlement is linked by a network of winding narrow roads, often along the bottom of valleys. Small disused pits characterise the area, including along the B3046 and the road from Axford to Herriard;
- Public Rights of Way, including part of the Three Castles Path Long Distance Path, reach the majority of the area, providing walkers with a sense of peacefulness away from obvious human influences. Routes within woodland, particularly along the valley bottoms, such as through Norton's Wood, provide a sense of enclosure and remoteness;
- There is a large solar and bio power farm to the north-west of Herriard, although this is a low lying feature, largely contained by surrounding vegetation;
- Ellisfield Camp (SM 107).

### Key Issues

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodland;
- Some localised areas of comparatively weaker structure and a more open landscape on the plateau to the east of the area, resulting from hedgerow removal and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;
- Management of road verges and hedge banks and damage from agricultural practices and road improvements;
- Loss and fragmentation of unimproved/semi-improved grassland, and need to manage grassland to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Areas of intensive farming practices lowering biodiversity levels;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats;
- Noise intrusion of A339.

### GUIDANCE

#### Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valley Landscape Aims

The strategic aim for the Ellisfield Clay Plateau and Valleys Character Area is to conserve the overall rural pattern of woodland blocks and hedgerows with small scale settlement, and limiting increases in urbanisation to maintain the quiet unspoilt rural character and sense of remoteness. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network, and the variety of woodland.

#### Landscape Guidelines

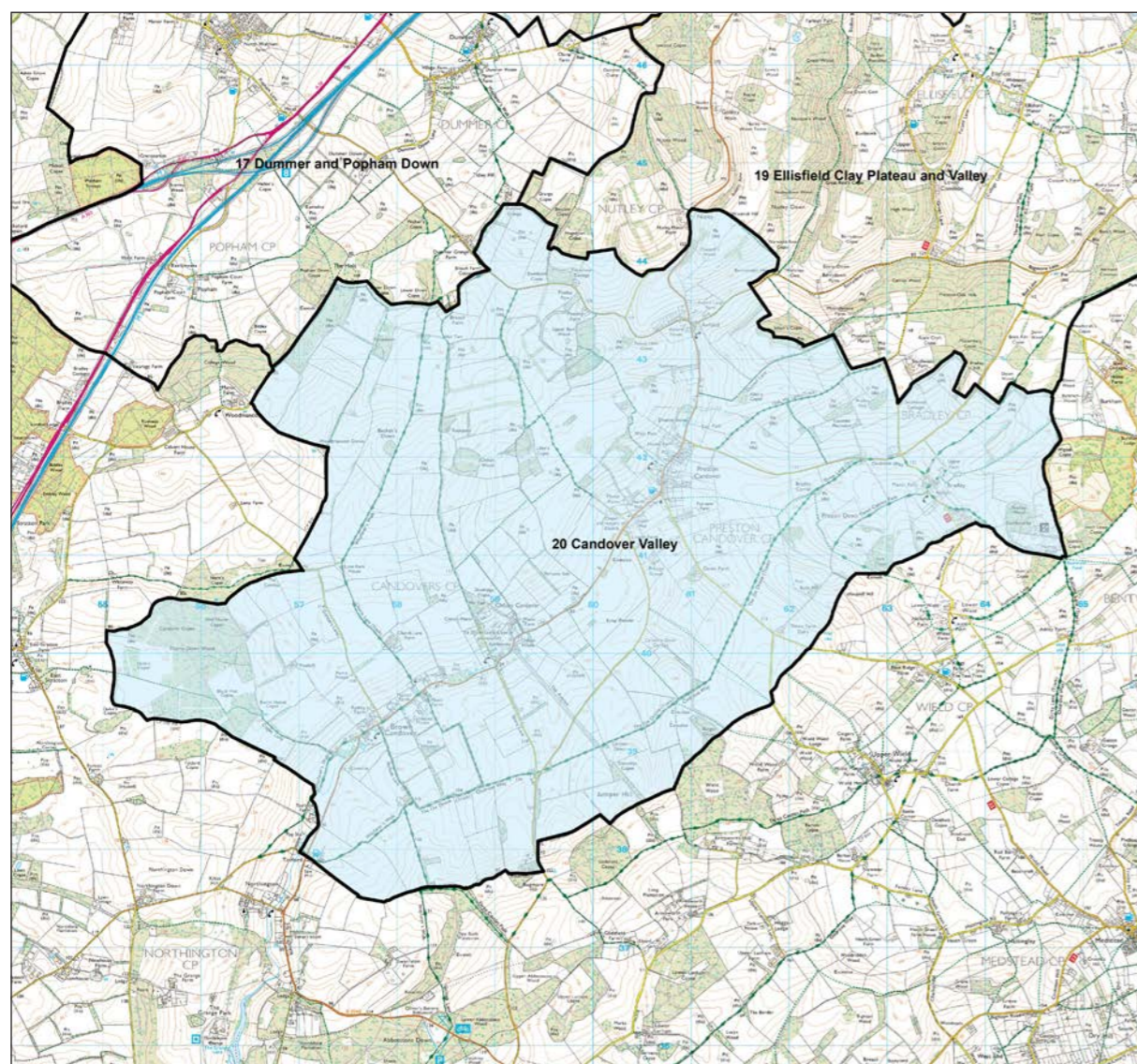
##### Land Management

- Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long term management and replanting to retain their ecological value, including in particular the numerous areas of ancient semi-natural woodland across the Character Area;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within more open landscape on the plateau to the east, in order to enhance the historic hedgerow network;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows, woodlands, grasslands and field margins;
- Encourage improved management of road verges and hedgebanks, including along the winding narrow roads;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assarts and encourage conservation of the those elements;
- Conserve historic elements of the landscape, and encourage appropriately management of historic parkland landscape and maintain associated lodges and gateways;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

##### Built Development

- Ensure any small scale development is sensitively sited in association with existing settlement, where appropriate, whilst retaining the rural character of the area, including along lanes, such as along Green Lane;
- Conserve existing historic settlements, such as Ellisfield;
- Avoid visual intrusion from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that potential road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, such as unlit roads through Ellisfield, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

## CHARACTER AREA 20: CANDOVER VALLEY



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### Location and Boundaries

This distinct valley landscape lies in the extreme south of the Borough, bounded to the west, south and south-east by the Borough boundary. The boundaries to the north and north-east are defined by a change in topography and vegetation cover.

### Formative Influences

The geology within this area predominantly consists of chalk layers covered with occasional deposits of clay and flint. There is a distinct linear north-east/south-west running valley with a narrow floodplain and sloping valley sides. Formation of the present landscape was probably initiated as long ago as the earlier prehistoric period (Neolithic and Bronze Age), when the original forest cover was largely cleared for arable agriculture and grazing, although patches of woodland survived or regenerated. Extant earlier prehistoric monuments attest to important activity in the Character Area, whilst the Hampshire SMR confirms the presence of people in the Bronze and Iron Ages, as well as some Roman, (limited) Saxon, and medieval activity. The settlements of Preston Candover, Chilton Candover, Brown Candover and Bradley are amongst those mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Medieval open field systems and downland were largely replaced by enclosure by informal means during the 17th-18th centuries, and later by parliamentary enclosure.



### Overall Landscape Character

This is a diverse landscape of farmland, woodland and parkland that is unified by the underlying, well-defined linear valley landform. It is characterised by large, arable fields on higher valley slopes, their low, well-trimmed hedgerows and infrequent woodland blocks lending an open feel. In contrast, the lower valley slopes and floor are overlain with smaller-scale fields of pasture. These are bounded by a strong hedgerow structure, interspersed with small, frequent woodland blocks, creating an enclosed and intimate landscape. The valley floor and sides are also distinguished by the presence of parkland, such as around Chilton House, Candover House and Preston House, which contributes an ornamental, managed character. Small settlements have developed along the route of the B3046 that runs along the valley bottom, and then onto the lower valley slopes. Despite the intrusion of the main road, the area as a whole retains a peaceful and rural character.

### **Candover Valley Key Characteristics**

- Distinctive river valley with narrow bottom, sloping valley sides and a discernible sense of place;
- Diverse pattern of arable, pasture, woodland and parkland;
- Typically quiet, unspoilt rural character, with a sense of remoteness and limited intrusion from people and traffic away from the settled valley bottom;
- Generally arable, large-scale open fields on higher ground, the assarts, large wavy-edged fields, ladder fields and parliamentary fields reflecting enclosure from early medieval to late 19th century times, with limited woodland blocks and hedgerows that are low or with few hedgerow trees;
- More enclosed landscape on lower valley slopes and bottom, with smaller fields, stronger hedgerow structure, greater proportion of pasture and distinctive riparian vegetation;
- Examples of valuable habitat types, comprising a few scattered blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland (some of it assarted), and remnant areas of unimproved pasture within the river valley;
- Areas of parkland along the valley floor, including East and West Parks, and The Avenue, giving a sense of a well-managed landscape;
- Intervisibility varying with location, linear views possible within the lower valley slopes, contained by landform and the strong tree and hedgerow structure, and more extensive from higher ground across the valley with rising landform on the opposite side of the valley forming a backdrop to treed settlement below;
- Small settlements developed along floor and lower slopes of the valley through which B3046 runs, including Brown Candover, Chilton Candover, Preston Candover and Axford, all of which have Conservation Areas. The small village of Bradley and its Conservation Area sits at the head of a valley spur to the east. Villages are traditional in character with limited modern extensions, such as to the east of Preston Candover. On the upper valley slopes, settlement is very limited, with just the occasional isolated farmstead;
- The relatively enclosed fields between the villages along the valley floor help maintain the separate identity of each settlement and their Conservation Areas;
- Rural lanes connect the B3046 to a network of roads further east, however slopes on the northern side of the valley have few roads, with vehicle access mainly limited to farm tracks;
- Public Rights of Way, including parts of the Wayfarer's Walk and The Ox Drove Long Distance Paths cross the area. Routes on the northern slopes extend a considerable distance away from settlement and roads and provide walkers with a keen sense of remoteness and tranquillity;
- There is a large farm to the south-east of Bradley, relatively well contained by surrounding tree cover;
- Many barrows of Scheduled Ancient Monument status.

### **Key Issues**

- Under-management of ancient semi-natural woodlands, including hazel coppice woods;
- Weakened landscape structure across the more extensive, open landscape types, resulting from hedgerow removal or neglect, and loss of broadleaf woodland to agricultural intensification;
- Management of hedgerows and field patterns of historic significance, and retention of hedgerow tree saplings;

- Management of road verges and hedgebanks, and damage from scrub encroachment, road improvements and legacy of agrochemical use on adjacent farmland;
- Decline in extent of grassland and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;
- Inappropriate management of floodplain vegetation and wetland habitats;
- Intensive farming practices lowering biodiversity levels;
- Management of unimproved neutral grassland, to maintain or enhance biodiversity;
- Lack of permanent grass field margins and uncultivated buffer strips next to sensitive wildlife habitats.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### **Candover Valley Landscape Aims**

The strategic aim for the Candover Valley is to conserve the pattern of hedgerows and arable fields on the upper slopes, conserve areas of parkland on the lower slopes, and maintain the enclosed setting, and separate identities of the settlements along the valley floor. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerows, and the existing blocks of woodland.

#### **Landscape Guidelines**

##### ***Land Management***

- Enhance management of ancient semi-natural woodlands, such as, but not limited to, Ewedown Copse, Upper Barn Wood, Chilton Wood and Thorny Down Wood;
- Conserve and enhance the woodlands through effective long term management, such as coppicing where appropriate and replanting with locally appropriate species to retain their varied character and their ecological value;
- Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within more open landscape away from the valley floor, in order to enhance the historic hedgerow network;
- Restore grass field margins wherever possible;
- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such hedgerows, woodlands, grasslands and field margins;
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the assarts and encourage conservation of the those elements;
- Encourage improved management of road verges and roadside hedgebanks;
- Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material.

##### ***Built Development***

- Ensure new development is in keeping with the scale and settlement pattern of villages and hamlets within the character area.
- Conserve the rural character of the area, avoiding adverse effects of expansion of settlement, in particular along the B3046, and limit the effects of development which could weaken the sense of separate identities of the historic villages in the valley;
- Avoid visual intrusion from development of energy generation sites, such as solar farms;
- Encourage the use of locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes across the area, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;
- Ensure that potential road lighting schemes in currently unlit areas, such as along the B3046, are assessed for visual impact, and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline.

## 5 SETTLEMENTS

5.1 This section of the report reviews the settlement analysis from the 2001 Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment, with updates as appropriate. The Townscape Types have been updated to include 21st century housing development, and are described at section 3.23 above.

5.2 The key characteristics, origins and historical development of each key settlement, describes their landscape setting, defines settlement character, and sets out the enhancement priorities for each settlement. Enhancement priorities are given separately for each settlement, as most of the recommendations are specific to particular places and features.

### Linkages with the Wider Countryside

5.3 It is important to stress that the settlement assessment has not been carried out in isolation from the landscape assessment, although for convenience of presentation it has been separated. The relationship between settlement and landscape setting is of key importance to the landscape character of the Borough. The particular relationship between each settlement and its setting is described in the following sections. However, there are also strong linkages due to historic patterns of movement across the landscape and between settlements. Within the Borough, at the medieval hundred level for example, one of the major factors linking settlement and landscape is that of physical communication - access to churches, caputs, markets, large houses, and towns. Regional exchange of goods and the provision of services for main centres has produced a stellar pattern of roads and tracks. In a prehistoric context these routes frequently linked individual farm sites to hillfort 'centres' such as The Ridgeway from Winklebury Hill to Walbury Hill, passing by Ladle and Beacon Hills. Others, such as the Harrow Way, appear to have been trade routes for many centuries.

5.4 The Roman invasion had a significant effect with straight, purpose-built roads constructed to move troops, supplies and goods. Hampshire contained a number of important settlements including Silchester within the Borough, Winchester and Portchester, and roads were built to link all these towns and centres beyond. Some survived to become an important part of the modern road system either because they were good dry routes across difficult country, or because they linked settlements which retained some importance, for example the A33 between Winchester and Popham.

5.5 Throughout the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods a network of lanes and tracks developed in the lowland areas of the Borough. This was closely related to the gradual clearance of woodland to create farmland, and the establishment of farms and villages. Where areas of farmland were carved out of the woods and heaths by assarting – the process of clearing, enclosing and cultivating areas of former common land and waste- a dense pattern of winding lanes developed.

5.6 Diversions of well-established routes, however, did occur. Frequently in the medieval period the establishment of a new town (eg Overton and Newtown) was accompanied by the diversion of existing routes into the new market place. Building of some new towns was accompanied by building new bridges, making many well-used fords and ferries redundant.

5.7 The gradual conversion of the chalk downland from large arable fields into enclosures for sheep and cattle began, following a population decline in the fourteenth century. These large enclosures provided sheep walks, while in some areas downland remained unenclosed as common pasture. This is probably when the complex network of droveways across the downland fully developed, with flocks of sheep moved from daytime pasture to arable land at night. These droveways

continued in use until well into the 19th century, until the growth of the railways gradually led to their decline.

5.8 During the 19th and 20th centuries the radical change in settlement patterns gave rise to further changes in the road pattern with new roads coming into existence. At a local level, there was considerable movement, whether within parish, township or tithing. Routes from settlements or farms to the church are often seen. However, most local movement was from farmsteads to fields. Detailed studies of large nucleated villages with extensive open fields have shown there was a dense network of tracks between blocks of strips and along headlands (cf Taylor 1979). Less necessary was access to areas of woodland or the mill. New lines of communication were created with enclosure of the open landscape. This was often reflected in dramatic road alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries.

5.9 The nine key settlements assessed on the following pages are as follows:

1. Basingstoke
2. Tadley/Baughurst/Pamber Heath
3. Chineham
4. Oakley
5. Whitchurch
6. Overton
7. Kingsclere
8. Old Basing
9. Bramley and Bramley Green

5.10 The following assessments are accompanied by a diagram indicating the landscape setting and character of each settlement. The diagrams identify elements of landscape structure including ridges, river corridors and woodland, and show notable views towards the settlement and where there are soft, well integrated edges, or strong linear boundaries to the built up areas. The approximate visual settings identified in the 2001 assessment are included on the diagrams and have been adjusted through desk study where settlement growth has occurred, particularly on the edge of Basingstoke, however this is subject to detailed on site assessment. Additionally, areas of landscape which provide separation between settlements, enabling settlements to avoid coalescence and maintain their separate identities, have also been indicated on the diagrams.

## 1 BASINGSTOKE

### Origins and Historical Development

Basingstoke is situated in the east of the Borough with its medieval core located on the south slopes of the valley of the River Loddon. Road links to Newbury, Reading, London, Winchester, Alton and Andover converge here, the London to Andover route being part of the main historic route between London and the West Country. Prehistoric activity is well-known from the Basingstoke area. As well as isolated finds of earlier pre-historic artefacts, there is also evidence of monuments from the Bronze Age onwards. This includes the remnants of two barrow cemeteries at Buckskin and South Ham, and one Iron Age hill fort at Winklebury. There is also Iron Age settlement evidence, for example from north-west of Winklebury, Oakridge, Cranbourne and Cowdery's Down.

Included within the boundaries of modern Basingstoke are the sites of a number of rural medieval settlements (including Hatch, Kempshott and Eastrop). The medieval town had a core with an irregular grid of streets, comprising two main east-west routes joined by two north-south roads. There were probably regular property plots along the sides of the streets. There was a market from the 13th century, and probably a hospital and mills. There is likely to have been a church by the late Saxon period, although the earliest visible parts of St Michael's Church date from the 14th century.

The manufacture of woollen goods was important to the town throughout the medieval period and beyond, probably because of its good communication links and its proximity to the downs. In the 16th century the town prospered, but it declined during the 17th century. Malting was an important industry during the 18th century. In the early 18th century Church Street was the most built-up area of the town, although there were also property plots along Winchester Street, London Street and Wote Street. In 1777-78 the Basingstoke Canal was built, linking the town to London via the River Wey. The coming of the railways in 1840 and 1848 stimulated a growth in population. However, by the 19th century (1810 map) Basingstoke was still a relatively small town, with areas such as Winklebury, Oakridge and Chineham as separate settlements, surrounded mainly by fields and downland.

In the mid and late 19th century new roads were laid out around the edge of the historic core of the town, as were development areas. In the mid 20th century, under a national policy, the town was selected to re-house large numbers of people from the London area. As a result, new housing estates and associated hierarchical road networks were constructed in areas such as Buckskin, Black Dam, Brighton Hill, Popley and Winklebury. Industrial estates were also constructed, for example at Houndmills and Daneshill. Part of the historic core was re-developed as a shopping centre.

Growth of the town has continued into the 21st century, with northerly extensions at Popley and Rooksdown, and to the south at Kempshott. Further growth is likely in the future with large areas of housing allocated to the west at Manydown, and to the south at Basingstoke Golf Course.

### Basingstoke Key Characteristics

- Historic urban core with landmark buildings.
- A number of conservation areas towards the historic core and edges of the town.
- More intimate historic area around church.
- Use of traditional materials, including timber frame, brick, flint, stuccoed brickwork, plain clay tiles, and slate for later buildings.
- Victorian housing with landmark churches.
- Large areas of 20th and 21st century housing, industry and retail.
- Wide road corridors with roadside planting.
- Modern landmark buildings along Churchill Way.
- Office development at Viables, Basing View, Chineham and Hampshire International Business Parks.
- Significant retail areas including Festival Place, The Malls, and Brighton Hill Retail Park, and leisure at Basingstoke Leisure Park.
- Varied landscape setting, open arable to the west, south-west and north-west becoming more enclosed to north-east, east and south-east.
- Views of tall tower blocks from surrounding landscape.
- Linear, well-defined western and southern edges, formed by route of old Roman road and M3 corridor respectively.

### Basingstoke Landscape Setting

Due to its large size, Basingstoke, located in the shallow valley at the head of the River Loddon, has a varied setting and influences a number of different landscape character areas. To the south and west lies the relatively open chalk downland landscape, whilst to the north and east chalk gives way to a clay geology, reflected by a smaller scale, more enclosed landscape.

### Northern Setting and Edge

The north-east edge of Basingstoke merges into the urban form of Chineham. Bands of woodland form some separation between the two areas, but their edges are indistinguishable. Carpenter's Down Wood contains and encloses the setting to the north of Popley, limiting intervisibility with the landscape beyond. A narrow strip of community space, including playing fields, separates this large woodland from the abrupt residential urban edge, providing a transition from built form to rural landscape. From the north-west of the town the predominantly large scale arable landscape slopes away to form ridgelines which define and contain the settlement setting. To the extreme north-west the setting is slightly more extensive, as the hospital development and housing adjacent to Rooksdown Lane has spread up to the ridgeline, and is visible within the distinctive rolling landscape beyond. Built form on high ground in the south of Basingstoke is visible from a wide area within the northern landscape.

The urban edge, which extends from the A340 to Carpenter's Down Wood, is partially contained from the surrounding landscape by a ridgeline, recent tree planting and some small copse and shelter belts. Between the A340 and Rooksdown Lane the settlement edge is more integrated, with bands of tree planting around the hospital and modern housing development.

Countryside to the north of Basingstoke, to the east of the A340, forms the gap between Basingstoke and the village of Sherborne St John, preventing coalescence between the two settlements and thereby maintaining their separate identities.

### **Eastern Setting and Edge**

The eastern setting of Basingstoke is defined by the River Loddon and associated fen, open space, and woodland, which separates it from Old Basing. The relatively enclosed, scrubby nature of the valley floor creates a soft and integrated urban edge. Some areas of neglected land along the eastern edge of the floodplain create a rough and fringe-like character in places. To the south-east the edge is defined by the A339 and the M3 interchange. However, mature planting along the easterly edge of Black Dam creates a soft and well-managed edge between the road and urban form.

### **Southern-Eastern Setting and Edge**

To the west of the A339, the landform slopes relatively steeply away from the southern edge of Basingstoke to a prominent wooded ridgeline, defining the extent of the southern setting. Fields are predominantly arable and large in scale which, along with its elevated position, allows relatively high intervisibility between the landscape and urban form. To the east of the A339, landform is more subdued and dominated by Hackwood Park. Distant views of Basingstoke are possible from more distant ridgelines.

The southern edge of Basingstoke is clearly defined by the M3. Tree planting along the M3 embankment obstructs the majority of views out from the southern edge of the settlement. There are three entrances into Basingstoke from the south, two passing under the motorway, and one crossing over. These crossings create clear gateways, which form a relatively abrupt transition into the settlement.

### **Western Setting and Edge**

Minor ridges formed by the gently undulating landform to the west of Basingstoke, together with a number of prominent woodlands and the partially wooded railway line define the extent of the western setting. Adjacent to the settlement the fields are predominantly arable, large and open, becoming more enclosed by woodland blocks towards Oakley.

Countryside to the west of Basingstoke, either side of the railway, forms the gap between Basingstoke and Oakley, preventing coalescence between the two settlements and thereby maintaining their separate identities.

The western settlement edge is very abrupt, forming a straight, linear boundary marking the route of an old Roman road, now used as a public footpath and cycleway along some of its length. This abruptness is accentuated by the contrast of the large open arable fields abutting directly to the linear settlement edge. A high, often double hedgerow extends along the majority of the urban edge, acting to reduce intervisibility and to soften the edge. However, its linear straight form identifies it as a distinct boundary within the landscape.

This linear edge is currently only broken where modern development has extended out to join the historic group of buildings at Worting. A small parkland and more enclosed localised field pattern around Worting forms a more gentle transition between urban form and open arable landscape when entering the town along the B3400. However, areas of permitted/allocated development surrounding Worting are likely to increase the westward extent of urban form beyond the existing linear edge.

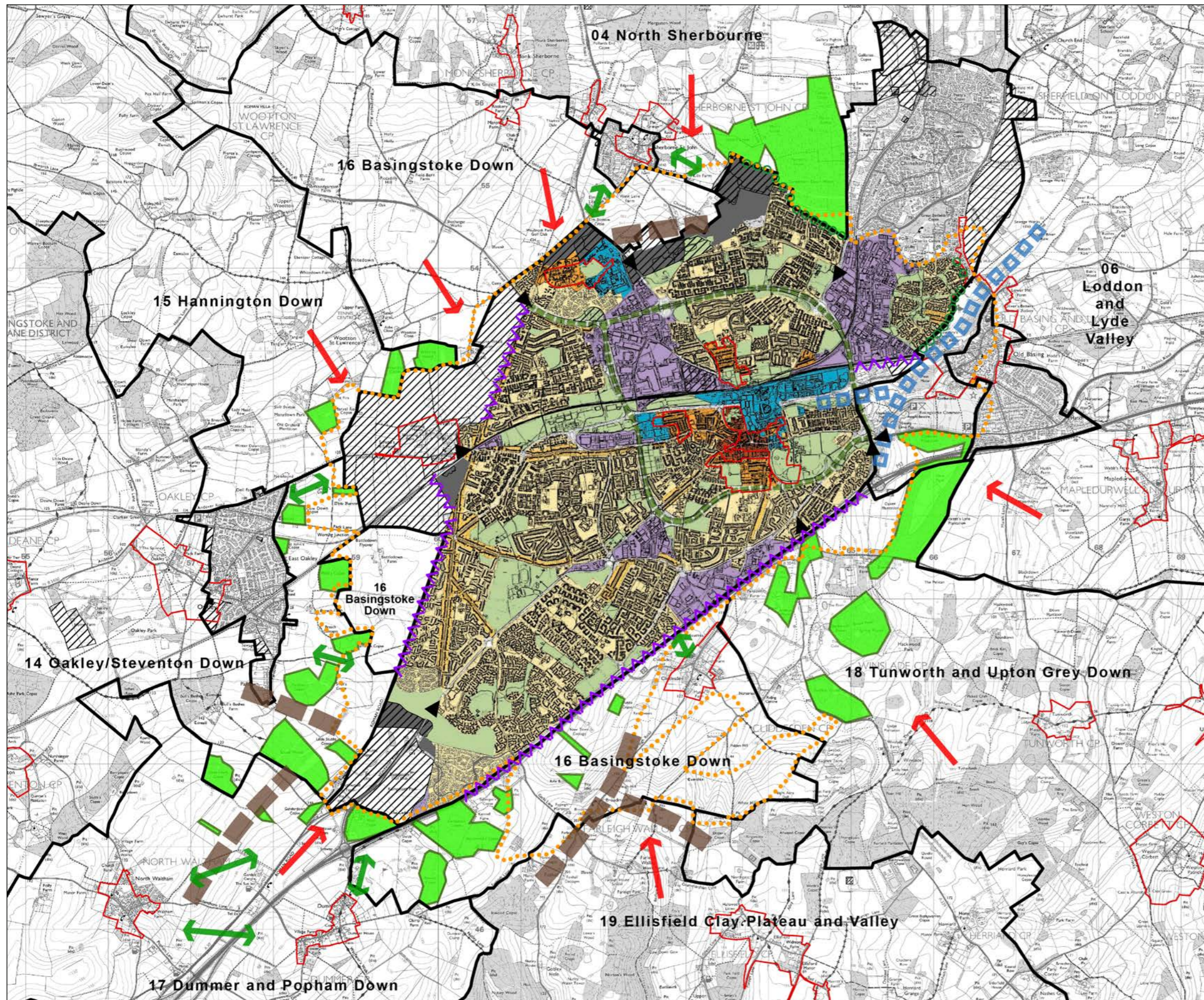
### **Basingstoke Settlement Character**

The historic urban core can still be seen along London Street, Winchester Street, Church Street and Wote Street, with Market Square forming an attractive space where these roads meet. The Museum (former Town Hall) is an early 19th century classical building, forming a focal point within the square. Other landmark buildings include Deane's Almshouses and the United Reformed Church in London Street. Contrasting with this urban form is the area around St Michael's Church. The church itself is a major landmark in the town centre, but other individual buildings include Chute House, the timber framed Church Cottage, as well as 19th century brick cottages. Old maps show this area as the edge of the town, and the enclosed open spaces of Glebe Gardens, Church Square and the Remembrance Gardens are important to the setting of these buildings. Important open spaces in the town include the War Memorial Park (formerly Goldings Park), which was laid out at the end of the 18th century, including spinneys and belts of oak, cedar and beech.

The building of the railways in 1840 and 1848 led to the growth of the town, and new roads were laid out around the historic core. Brick was the usual material, with slate or clay tile for the roofs. Attractive semi-detached villas of brick with stone details can be seen in Sarum Hill. Terraced development can still be seen in the north, west and south of the town. Linear development took place along all the main roads out of the town between the 1930s-1950s, including Kempshott Lane at some distance to the west of the town. Housing estates now fill in the areas between the earlier linear development, and there are areas of interwar and post-war local authority housing around the town between the arterial routes.

Basingstoke was designated as a town for London overspill in the 1960s. Popley is typical of much of the overspill housing in the town. The houses here are short terraced blocks which are repeated across the site and have smaller plots, but there is more open space between them, with well-treed footpath links. Cars are accommodated in separate garage and parking courts.

The main industrial areas are at Houndmills and Daneshill. The central shopping area was redeveloped in the late 1960s/early 1970s, with the destruction of much of the historic core. There is some good quality office development at Viabes with architecturally distinguished buildings in well-landscaped grounds. A ring road was built in stages around the town centre, and its road corridors are wide and heavily landscaped, hiding the adjacent development. Churchill Way provides the link between the ring road and the town centre, with quality office development facing out across the landscaped open space of Eastrop Park.



**KEY**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Character area boundary   | View from high points                    |
| River corridor/floodplain | Approximate visual setting to settlement |
| Prominent ridgelines      | Separation between Settlements           |
| Prominent woodland blocks | Key approach/gateway                     |
| Soft well integrated edge | Conservation area boundary               |
| Strong linear boundary    | Permitted/allocated development          |

**Settlement Character:**

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Historic urban core                      | Modern industrial development    |
| Historic area with rural characteristics | Modern office/retail development |
| Post Medieval -19th century expansion    | Woodland within urban area       |
| Linear 20th century expansion            | Open space within urban area     |
| 20th century housing estates             | Landscape road corridors         |
| 21st century housing estates             |                                  |

Figure 8 Basingstoke Landscape Setting and Settlement Character



### **Basingstoke Conservation and Enhancement Priorities**

- Conserve River Loddon floodplain to the east of Basingstoke, enhancing its wildlife and ecological value, and retaining its function as a natural edge and buffer between Basingstoke and Old Basing.
- Encourage softening of the western edge, through strengthening of hedgerow structure and new copse planting.
- Encourage and retain structure planting along the motorway corridor, to maintain its function as a strong southern boundary to the settlement, and help screen built form.
- Encourage further tree planting along the northern edge of the town, to help integrate built form into the landscape.
- Conserve and maintain ecological, landscape and screening value of prominent woodlands, including Carpenter's Down Wood, Cowdown Wood, St John's Wood, Worting Wood, Well's Copse and Jeffery's Copse, and other smaller woodland blocks.
- Conserve the historic buildings (both listed and unlisted) within the urban core of the town, and ensure the continued protection of its conservation areas.
- Encourage the conservation of large trees within residential areas, and enhance important open spaces within the settlement, including War Memorial Park, Glebe Gardens, Eastrop Park and South View Cemetery.

## 2 TADLEY/BAUGHURST/PAMBER HEATH

### Origins and Historical Development

Tadley is located on the northern boundary of the Borough and County. Like many other parts of North Hampshire, the parish was originally heath and common land. Tadley was one of a number of small scattered settlements, along with Baughurst and Pamber Heath.

There are references to woodland in all three villages in Saxon and medieval documents. Although all the villages consist mostly of modern development, there is some evidence of early settlement. At Tadley there is an isolated medieval church, while at Baughurst there is a 19th century church, which may be on the site of a medieval predecessor. There is documentary mention of a village at Pamber from the 12th century.

The pattern of settlement and surrounding landscape here comprises small developments located along winding lanes interspersed with patches of common. For example, the series of short, irregular plots, which run off the main north-south road at the southern end of Tadley, is evidence of encroachment onto common land. This is thought to have resulted from tenant evictions in the 17th century. Elsewhere, encroachment is represented by small, irregular shaped fields, including islands on the common.

Many of the inhabitants of old were dependent on woodland crafts for their livelihoods, with villagers providing coppiced timber for various uses, including hurdles, brooms, baskets, barrels and kindling. There were also brickworks, utilising the local clay.

The first edition OS map shows sporadic development across the area, and subsequent maps show a gradual intensification of development. Since the 1960s there has been rapid growth. Initial expansion occurred to house workers at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Aldermaston, which adjoins Tadley across the county boundary in Berkshire.

### Tadley/Baughurst/Pamber Heath Key Characteristics

- Comprises three settlements.
- Small settlements located along winding lanes interspersed with patches of common.
- Set within a mixed farmland and woodland landscape with heathland common.
- Lack of central core.
- Use of traditional materials - predominantly brick and plain clay tile.
- Mostly modern residential development.
- Small areas of historic settlement, including conservation areas within Tadley, to the south-east and along Church Road.
- Linear character with cul-de-sac development.
- Some heath and woodland remains within the built-up areas.
- Footpath links between housing areas and open spaces/woodland.

### Tadley/Baughurst/Pamber Heath Landscape Setting

The settlements are set within a mixed farmland and woodland landscape, which provides a strong structure to the south and west of the settlement. The eastern landscape is dominated by woodland, heathland and small-scale fields, providing an enclosed and intimate setting.

### Northern Setting and Edge

The Hampshire boundary runs along the northern edge of Tadley. Large areas of woodland, bands of tree planting and heath/scrub land create low/no intervisibility with the settlement and the landscape to the north.

### Eastern Setting and Edge

The setting to the east of Tadley is contained and defined by the large areas of tree, scrub and heath of Silchester Common and Pamber Forest. A narrow ribbon of small scale, predominantly pasture fields separate the urban edge of Tadley and Pamber Heath from the forest. These are enclosed within a strong hedgerow structure, which reduces intervisibility between urban form and landscape, allowing the soft rural edge to merge with the urban form. Viewpoints from this urban edge offer important views towards Pamber Forest to the east. Silchester Common abuts directly to the edge of Pamber Heath, allowing tree and scrub growth to soften the linear straight edges of the settlement. Entrance from the east is relatively gradual, passing houses to the north, and Silchester Common to the south, before entering the main body of Pamber Heath.

### Southern Setting and Edge

To the south, landform typically slopes down to narrow, relatively enclosed stream valleys, before rising again to the undulating landscape. Fields range from large to small-scale, predominantly pasture with a relatively strong hedgerow structure, and numerous small, irregular shaped woodland copses, creating an intimate and relatively contained setting with low intervisibility. A golf course forms part of the southern setting, enclosing part of the urban edge with dense bands of tree planting.

The southern edge of Tadley and Baughurst is relatively fragmented. To the south-west, large blocks of woodland, and small-scale fields with high hedgerows, create a soft well integrated edge. To the south-east, the edge is slightly harsher, although hedgerow planting does help to integrate it into the rural landscape. Views from the south-east of Tadley, where vegetation is limited, extend as far as Basingstoke to the south, and ridgelines near Hannington to the south-west. There are five significant entrances into Tadley from the south. All of these provide a relatively gradual transition into the town, with previews of the town, outlying buildings, urban influences, and a gentle merging of landscape features with urban form.

### Western Setting and Edge

The setting to the west of Baughurst is defined by a south-west sloping landform, falling to a tributary stream of the River Enborne, enclosed by large areas of broadleaf woodland. The predominantly pasture fields, with a strong hedgerow structure and large woodland blocks, create an intimate, enclosed landscape with little intervisibility between landscape and urban form. The edge of the settlement is fragmented and soft, integrated by tree/woodland cover.

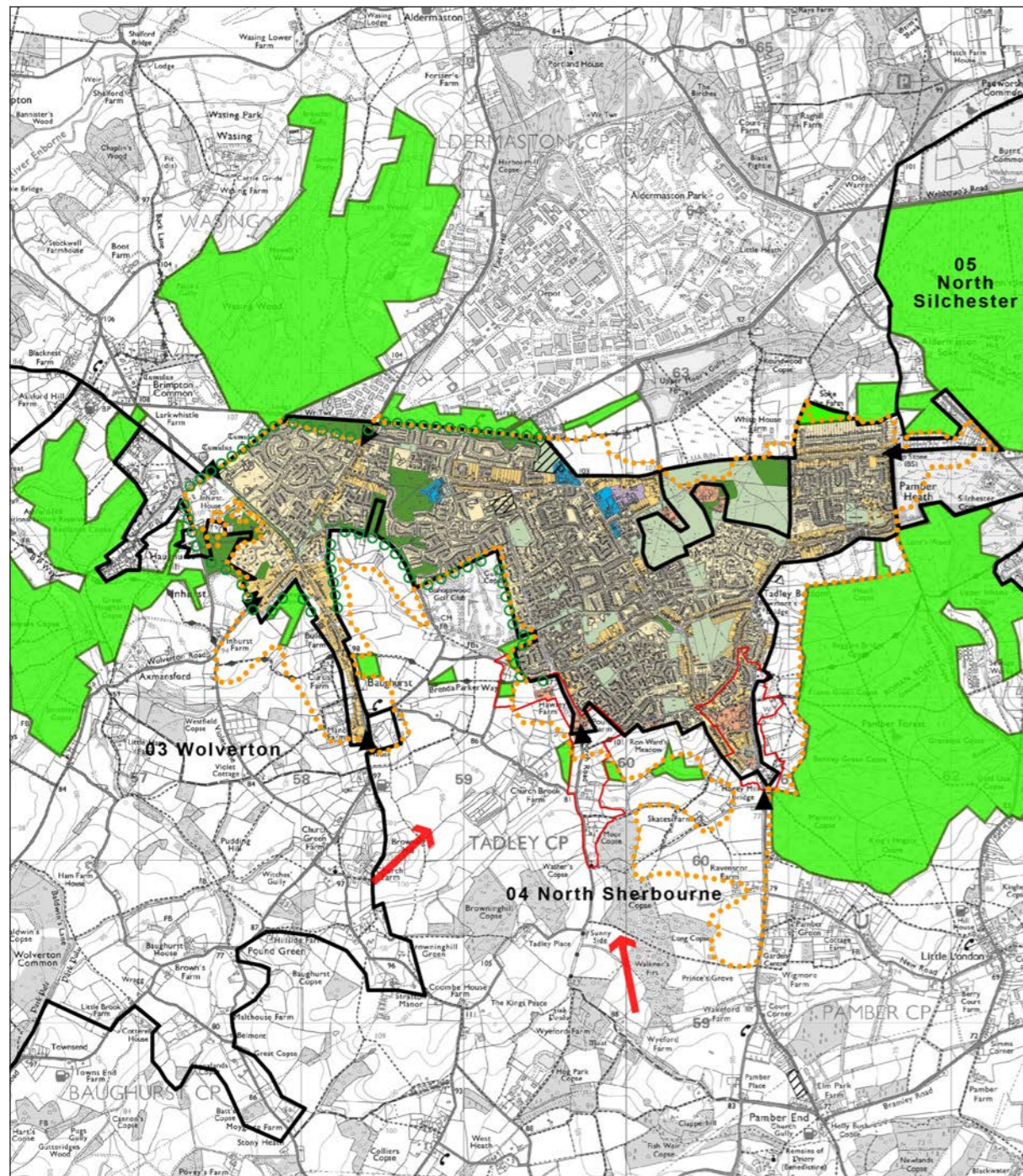
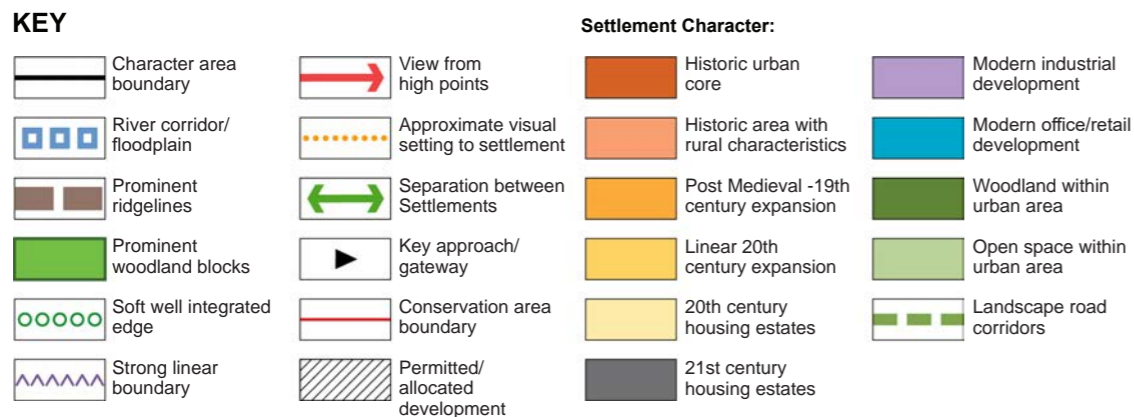


Figure 9 Tadley/Baughurst/Pamber Heath Landscape Setting and Settlement



### Tadley/Baughurst/Pamber Heath Settlement Character

Some older houses can be found in the original village of Tadley, which now forms the south-eastern tip of the modern development, and at Church Road a little to the west. These are mostly of brick with clay tiled roofs, and date from the 17th and 18th centuries. They include the old United Reformed Church of 1718. The overall character of this area is of a small rural settlement, with small properties enclosed by their hedged gardens, although there is much modern infilling.

Church Road is a narrow, hedged country lane with occasional old buildings, including the old church of St Peter. This is of medieval origin, but now dates mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries. Brick and tile are the main building materials. Hawley Farm and Foxley Farm are among other building groups along the lane. Hedgerows restrict the views along the road.

Gradual encroachment continued in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but Tadley grew rapidly after World War II. This was due to the development of Aldermaston airbase and the establishment of AWE, just to the north, across the county boundary. From the 1930s, linear development took place along most of these lanes, and in the 1950s local authority housing was built between the old village and Church Lane around a village green with a new church. Further local authority housing was built in a series of loops off the A340. More concentrated cul-de-sac development has taken place since the 1940s, filling in much of the remaining heathland. This housing is of a higher density.

Around the central crossroads of Baughurst is some looser modern development within well-treed grounds. A few areas of heath and woodland survive as islands within the residential development, most notably off Brimpton Road. Footpath links join housing areas to the open spaces.

### Conservation and Enhancement Priorities

- Retain the ancient, thick hedges that exist throughout the Tadley conservation area.
- Retention and management of existing areas of heathland at Silchester Common, Tadley Common and the small area to the west of Tadley, to prevent encroachment of invasive scrub and woodland.
- Encourage development of heath associated vegetation along the edges and within the settlements, where appropriate.
- Conserve the narrow strip of meadow land/open land between the Pamber Forest and the eastern edge of Tadley/southern edge of Pamber Heath, retaining its landscape value and public access.
- Maintain and enhance prominent woodlands including Pamber Forest, which surround the settlement and the mosaic of small fields and copses to the south.
- Woodland bands that enclose the B3051 and A340 should be maintained as a valuable screening and ecological element.
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the conservation areas.
- Ensure design of any new development reflects the character of its surroundings, eg use of traditional materials and building styles.

### 3 CHINEHAM

#### Origins and Historical Development

Chineham is situated in the east of the Borough, adjacent to, and merging into, the northern boundaries of Basingstoke town. It appears to have originated as a Saxon settlement. There is a medieval moated site in the centre of the modern housing development. However, the medieval village seems to have been abandoned at a sub-sequent period, and by 1810 its extent was very small - just a farm or hamlet located south of the fork in the road from Basingstoke to Reading and Sherfield. A brick kiln is depicted on the 1810 map.

The 20th century settlement known as Chineham has developed on the eastern side of the railway, and is centred about 2km to the north-east of the old Chineham Farm. In the 1950s linear development spread along the main road. Since the 1970s large-scale residential development has taken place between the bypass, which was built in 1981, and the railway line to the west. A large business park lies to the west of the railway line, and the Chineham Centre (shopping precinct) is across the bypass.

Chineham has grown northwards in the early part of the 21st century, with a large housing development at Sherfield Park. The settlement is likely to expand further in the future, with large housing sites allocated to the north-west at Upper Cufaude farm, and land to the east of Chineham.

#### Chineham Key Characteristics

- Southern boundary indistinguishable from the northern edge of Basingstoke.
- Primarily cul-de-sac housing development, with business park area to the west, and the district centre to the south.
- Wooded railway line physically, and visually, divides housing from business park area.
- Lacks a central core.
- Important landscape areas within the settlement, linked by a network of footpaths.
- Moated site open space.
- Petty's Brook forms important open space/vegetation links into the settlement.
- Predominantly soft edges to the north, east and west with limited intervisibility with the surrounding landscape, due to numerous woodland blocks/tree lined hedgerows.

#### Chineham Landscape Setting

Chineham lies within a mixed farmland and woodland setting, strongly influenced by Basingstoke to the south. The northern and eastern landscape is predominantly pasture, relatively enclosed, with numerous woodland blocks and strong hedgerow structure. To the east, the landscape is slightly more open, and primarily used for arable land.

#### Northern Setting and Edge

Housing development at Sherfield Park forms a recent northern extension to Chineham, extending the northern edge of Chineham to meet with the southern edge of the former Bramley Ordnance Depot, south of Bramley. Woodland within the extensive ordnance site restricts intervisibility between the settlement and the northern landscape, and when combined with vegetation along the Reading to Basingstoke railway line, results in a relatively abrupt entrance into Chineham from the north-west.

#### Eastern Setting and Edge

The landscape to the north-east of Chineham is formed by the Petty's Brook, flowing east to the Loddon, and a typically medium to large-scale arable fieldscape. Intervisibility between the settlement and this landscape is very low, due to the embankments and high hedgerows which edge the A33 adjacent to Chineham, providing a strong visual barrier. Great Binfield Copse, to the north of the Chineham Centre also provides a soft and contained edge to the south-east of the settlement. Modern housing development has extended as far as the A33, along the north-east and eastern edge of Chineham. Petty's Brook floodplain breaks this distinct urban edge. Hedgerow planting along the A33 is weaker at the point where it crosses the floodplain, allowing views of less well-integrated modern housing to the north of the floodplain.

Entrance into Chineham from the east is characterised by the busy A33 and roundabouts, allowing access into the residential area and Chineham Centre. Although urban influences are obvious, high wooded embankments limit views into Chineham from the A33, creating a fairly abrupt entrance.

#### Southern Setting and Edge

The southern edge of Chineham blends and merges into the northern edge of Basingstoke, with little to distinguish the division. Woodland blocks and bands of tree planting create a relatively soft, integrated urban area, although its edge is indistinct.

#### Western Setting and Edge

The western part of Chineham comprises a business park, separated both physically and visually from the residential area by the linear, north-south running, densely wooded railway line. The setting is defined primarily by a large mixed woodland which edges the majority of the business park. This creates a natural visual barrier with virtually no intervisibility to the landscape beyond. Playing fields adjoin the settlement to the extreme south-west, allowing some intervisibility between properties in Popley and Chineham Business Park, although mitigated by embankment and tree planting adjacent to the sports fields.

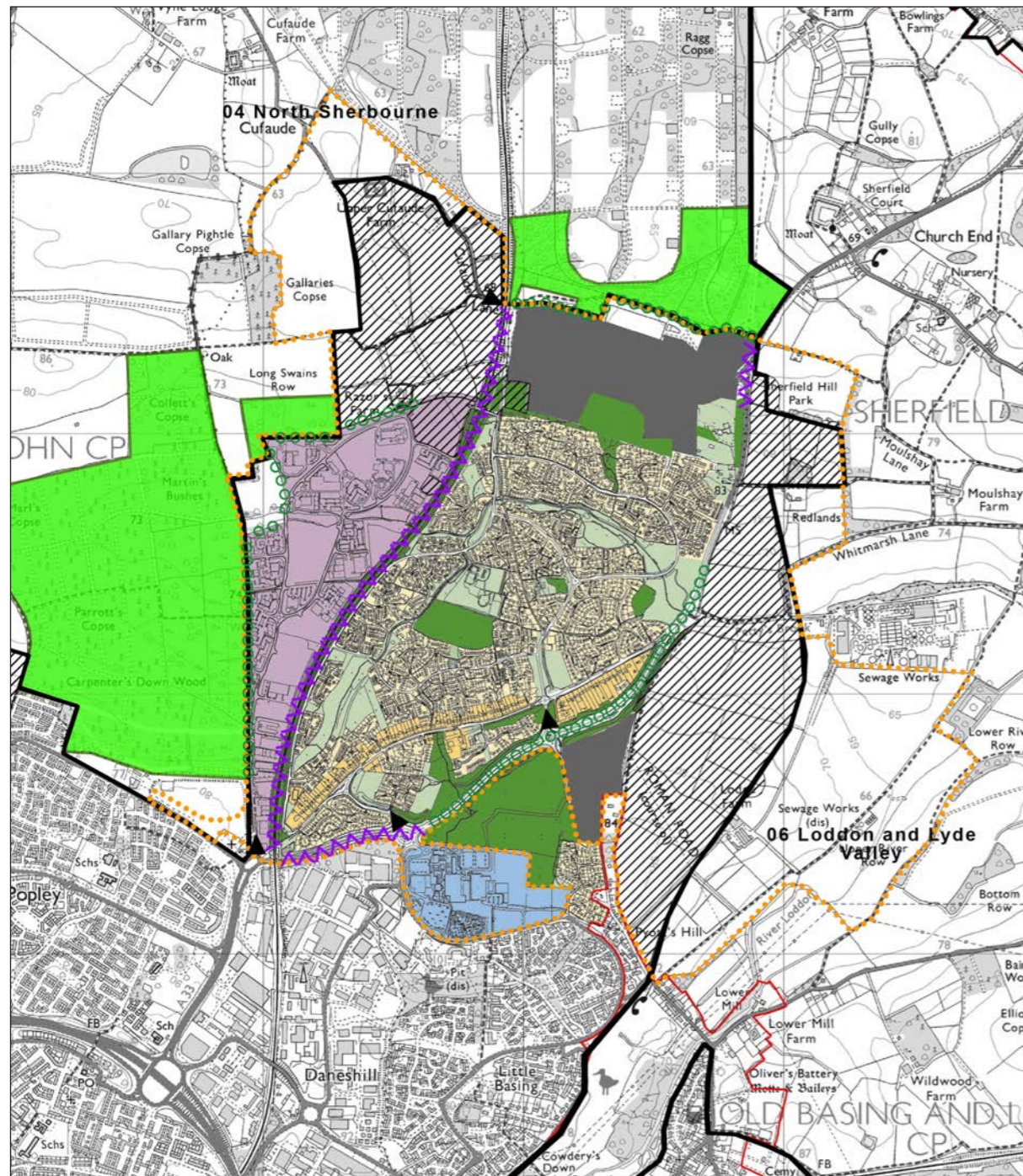
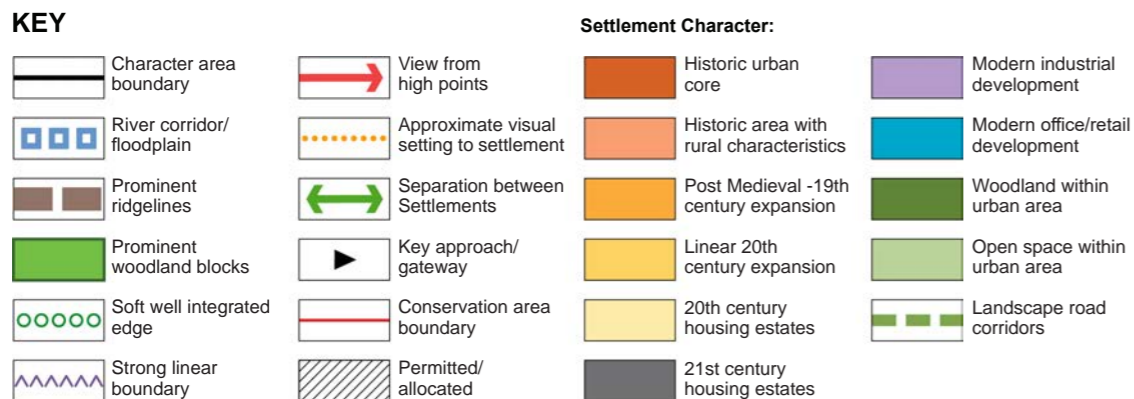


Figure 10 Chineham Landscape Setting and Settlement Character



### Chineham Settlement Character

As a deserted village, two old relics remain of Chineham, and they are located some 2 kilometres apart. The first is Chineham House (which is now in the Basingstoke settlement area), referred to on old maps as 'Chineham'. The other is a moated site, in the middle of the modern village of Chineham (east of Farm View Drive). A brick and flint farm building, dating from the 19th century, also survives just to the west of the moat.

20th century linear development lies along the old Basingstoke to Reading road. This is low density housing, with a mix of one and two-storey individual houses within fairly large plots.

Most of the rest of Chineham has been developed since the 1970s. Houses are generally laid out in culs-de-sac. Open spaces form an important element in the settlement design, with footpath links between various culs-de-sac. Community facilities – church, school, pub and village hall - are spread across the settlement rather than being concentrated in one area, but footpath links serve to integrate them within the housing development.

An area of woodland has been retained near the school, and an important wedge of open space, cuts into the settlement along the stream valley. The old moated site is a particularly attractive area of informal open space with mature trees and wood.

The business park development is located across the railway line to the west. The area is characterised by large buildings with areas of car parking. The road that forms the western boundary is lined with mature trees which screen the development. A large shopping development (Chineham Centre) is located across the dual carriageway. This is linked to the residential development by a footpath and a bridge across the road.

### Chineham Conservation and Enhancement Priorities

- Retain and conserve the important ecological and landscape value of Carpenter's Down Wood/Martins Buses, Long Swains Row and Galleries Copse to the west, Petty's Copse and other copse/woodland areas to the north, and Great Binfield Copse to the south-east, which are valuable entities in the settlement setting.
- Conserve and strengthen planting along the A33.
- Conserve and enhance screening and landscape value of strong vegetation along the railway line, dividing residential and business use.
- Conserve and enhance the important Petty's Brook floodplain and 'green route' through the settlement, encouraging biodiversity and habitat creation, as well as softening the urban form.
- Encourage new tree planting adjacent to modern housing overlooking Petty's Brook to the east, to integrate built form into the landscape.
- Conserve the predominantly soft edge and contained nature of the settlement.
- Retain woodland blocks within the settlement.
- Retain individual trees and tree groups.
- Retain and conserve historic Park Pale to the east of Chineham.
- Retain internal open spaces, especially the moated site.

## 4 OAKLEY

### Origins and Historical Development

Oakley is situated approximately four miles west of Basingstoke on the south side of the B3400, which links Basingstoke with Overton and Whitchurch.

Oakley is an ancient settlement, possibly mentioned in a Saxon charter, and definitely mentioned in the Domesday Book and in 12th century documents. Oakley consisted of the three hamlets of West (or Church), East and North Oakley (the latter in Kingsclere parish). West Oakley comprised the church, manor house, farm, school, and a few estate cottages. East Oakley, located about half a kilometre away, was a small group of properties around a green, at the junction of three roads. The church and the green remain as twin focuses of Oakley.

The coming of the railways – and a station - did not provide any impetus for Oakley to grow, in spite of the railway junction just to the east. Old Ordnance Survey maps show a gradual increase in development along old lanes, through the first half of the 20th century. In 1951 a local authority estate was built south-east of the main railway line. Since that time, Oakley has grown into a dormitory of Basingstoke, with most of the recent development being in the form of culs-de-sac filling in the gaps between the earlier development.

#### Oakley Key Characteristics

- Ancient settlement, possibly of Saxon origin, with conservation area to the west at Church Oakley
- Set within an undulating farmland landscape, to the east of Oakley Park.
- Dominance of horse pasture between Oakley Park and the settlement.
- Setting contained by numerous woodland blocks and tree-lined hedgerows.
- Country estate character at Church Oakley.
- Attractive rural character at western end.
- Twin focal points of church and village green.
- Church tower is a landmark.
- Use of traditional materials – predominantly brick with plain clay tiles, but also some thatch, weather boarding, and flint.
- Open spaces within housing development, linked by footpaths.
- Predominantly modern linear and cul-de-sac development.

### Oakley Landscape setting

Oakley is set within an undulating farmland landscape, with many copse/woodland blocks providing enclosure to the settlement setting. The place-name means 'oak wood' in Old English and the settlement is mentioned in the Domesday Book with a reference to woodland for fencing. The existing copse/woodland blocks seen today may be a vestige of the ancient woodland mentioned in the Domesday Book. Horse pasture is dominant to the west, along with Oakley Park, which provides a valuable park-like characteristic, complementing the picturesque historic development of Church Oakley.

### Northern Setting and Edge

From the northern edge of the village the landscape slopes north and north-west, forming a predominantly arable, undulating landscape with woodland blocks. These ridgelines and woodland blocks form a relatively complex, but contained, setting to the settlement. The northern edge of the settlement is defined by the B3400, edged by narrow bands of tree cover and hedgerow planting on both sides of the road, creating a definite linear visual barrier. This relatively dense tree and hedgerow planting softens the distinct linear edge to the village, substantially reducing its visual significance within the northern landscape.

### Eastern Setting and Edge

To the east the landscape is relatively flat, with typically medium to large arable fields and woodland blocks. Minor undulations in the landform, along with significant woodland blocks, tree-lined hedgerows and the railway line with associated vegetation, form a relatively contained setting to the village.

The countryside to the east of the village forms the gap between Oakley and Basingstoke, preventing coalescence between the two settlements, and thereby helping to maintain their separate identities.

The eastern edge of the Oakley is well-defined, marked by the north-south running Fox Lane and St Johns Road, which form the abrupt interface between built form and arable fields. A dense, relatively high hedgerow to the east of Fox Lane softens the interface between urban form and landscape, along the north-eastern edge of the settlement. Further to the south, the hedgerow to the east of the road is more open, allowing greater intervisibility. However, garden hedgerows and trees to the west of the road act to merge the built form into the rural landscape. Pack Lane enters Oakley from the east, linking the village with Basingstoke. Glimpses of the settlement, particularly to the north, give indications of the village's presence before reaching it. However, the contrast between the open arable landscape near Basingstoke and the village form is noticeable.

### Southern Setting and Edge

From the south of the village, the medium to large-scale, predominantly arable, fields gently slope up southwards, cut by minor dry valleys, creating an undulating landscape. In close proximity to the village, fields become small, predominantly pasture and relatively enclosed. A number of prominent woodland/copse areas combine with the undulating landform to restrict views in and out of the settlement, and form a relatively contained setting to the settlement. A ribbon of housing has developed along the floor of a north-south running minor dry valley. Fields within this valley are small, pasture/'horsiculture', and enclosed by a strong hedgerow structure. This structure creates a well-integrated soft edge to the settlement. The south-western edge of the settlement is marked by the wooded railway line, forming a strong physical and visual barrier.

### Western Setting and Edge

The setting to the west of Oakley is defined predominantly by the wooded boundary of Oakley Park, and by undulating landform, which slopes up to ridgelines in the north-west. Field patterns between the Park and the village are typically medium to small, and dominated by horse pasture. Church Oakley forms a narrow ribbon of development which runs out westward, within a shallow valley, from the more compact linear western edge of Oakley, creating a slightly more fragmented edge. Field size and hedgerow planting act to soften this western edge. Entrance to Oakley from the west passes The Lodge at the B3400 junction, through Church Oakley and into the main body of the settlement, creating a gradual transition from rural landscape to urban form.

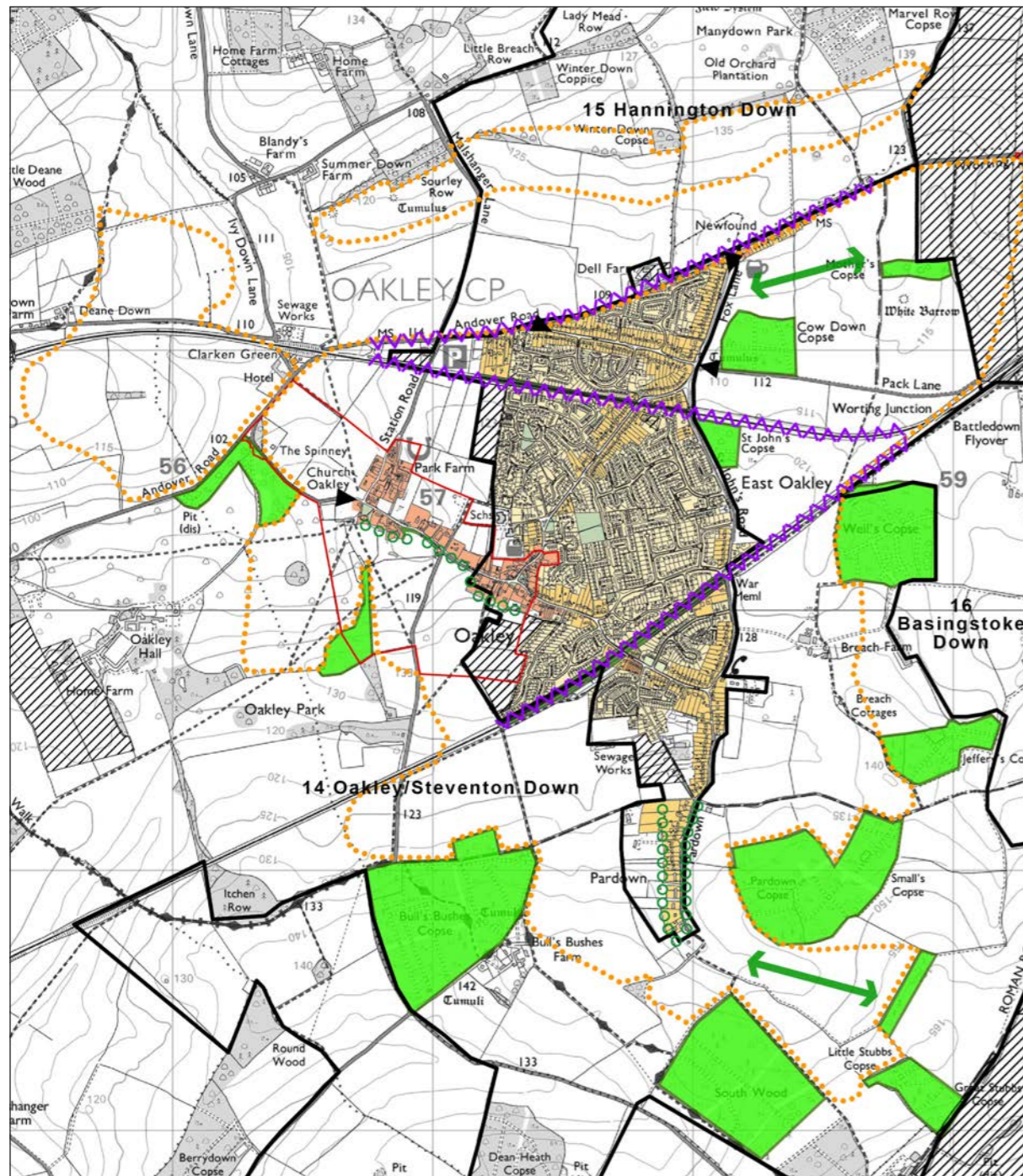


Figure 11 Oakley Landscape Setting and Settlement Character

| KEY |  | Settlement Character: |  |
|-----|--|-----------------------|--|
|     | Character area boundary                  |                       | Historic urban core                      |
|     | View from high points                    |                       | Historic area with rural characteristics |
|     | River corridor/floodplain                |                       | Post Medieval -19th century expansion    |
|     | Prominent ridgelines                     |                       | Linear 20th century expansion            |
|     | Prominent woodland blocks                |                       | 20th century housing estates             |
|     | Soft well integrated edge                |                       | 21st century housing estates             |
|     | Strong linear boundary                   |                       | Modern industrial development            |
|     | Approximate visual setting to settlement |                       | Modern office/retail development         |
|     | Separation between Settlements           |                       | Woodland within urban area               |
|     | Key approach/gateway                     |                       | Open space within urban area             |
|     | Conservation area boundary               |                       | Landscape road corridors                 |
|     | Permitted/allocated                      |                       |  |

### Oakley Settlement Character

Oakley is largely a modern dormitory settlement for Basingstoke. However, the two hamlets – West (Church) Oakley and East Oakley - still have an attractive rural character.

Church Oakley has a country estate character, reinforced by the elaborate Victorian church tower, the school, and Victorian estate workers cottages. The Manor House is set back behind its outbuildings (some of which have been converted). The dominant building materials are brick and clay tile, although the church is of flint. Its tower is a landmark from the main Basingstoke road. A small roadside pond forms an attractive open space opposite the manor.

The old part of East Oakley has attractive old cottages, grouped around a village green, but large areas of housing have developed to the east and south. This housing began by lining the pre-existing network of lanes, but later development has filled in many of the gaps behind. In the middle of the settlement is an area of public open space, with a children's playground which has footpath links to other parts of the village.

### Oakley Conservation and Enhancement Priorities

- Conserve and strengthen screening and ecological value of tree planting along the Andover road (B3400), recognising and defining this road as the northern edge of the village.
- Conserve and maintain the numerous copse areas to the east and south of the settlement, valuable for their biodiversity and landscape contribution to the setting.
- Maintain the valuable character of Oakley Park to the west, retaining the mature trees along its boundary, which contribute to the setting of Church Oakley.
- Strengthen hedgerow planting along St Johns Road to soften the urban edge, with tree replacement for long-term continuity of tree boundary.
- Retain picturesque and rural character of Church Oakley, discouraging modern infilling and encroachment.
- Retain and enhance village character around village green at East Oakley.
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the Church Oakley Conservation Area.
- Ensure design of any new development reflects the character of its surroundings, eg use of traditional materials and building styles.
- Maintain visual and physical separation from Basingstoke to the east to retain the separate settlement identity.

## 5 WHITCHURCH

### Origins and Historical Development

Whitchurch is located in the south-west of the Borough, within the distinct valley landscape of the River Test, approximately 10 miles west of Basingstoke. It is one of a string of small settlements that have developed along the linear valley landscape. The origins of Whitchurch, and its subsequent development over time have been strongly influenced by its river valley location and, in particular, its position in relation to road and rail links.

Whitchurch originated in Saxon times, and is mentioned in charters dating from AD909, and in the Domesday Book of 1086, when three mills were recorded. Although the original settlement was probably grouped around the church on the western edge of the town, its centre now lies at the junction of five main roads, all of which predate the town. These routes converge here to cross the river, and it seems likely therefore that the town itself originated as a medieval foundation, created to take advantage of these important routes, and the river. The town developed on the relatively steep northern side of the valley, presumably to avoid the risk of floods. The road system allowed a good coaching trade, and the town stands at an important crossroads where the old London to Exeter road crosses the Winchester to Oxford road. The first railway arrived in 1854 when the London to South-West line was built, and in 1885 the Didcot to Winchester line was opened.

The natural assets provided by the river, and surrounding chalk landscape, strongly influenced the town's traditional industries. The river was the main source of power to drive mills, three of which survive today. In the medieval period brewing and baking seem to have been important industries, while during the 16th century Whitchurch became a centre for cloth making. Later industries included paper making at Freefolk, which utilised the clear water of the fast-flowing chalk stream to make crisp quality paper (the industry later moved to Overton). Whiting Works, which extracted chalk from Lynch Hill, was located in London Road and the chalk face can still be seen behind the 19th century cottages in London Road, forming a distinctive feature of the eastern approach to the town.

The medieval market probably lay at the centre of the town where the five main roads meet, and these main streets were all lined with burgage plots. It was not until the 19th century that there was a considerable expansion beyond this medieval core of the town. The large houses in the vicinity of the church, dating from the 17th - early 19th century, are a redevelopment of previously occupied sites, rather than an expansion from the medieval core. The coming of the railways may account for the later 19th century housing, which includes semi-detached cottages along London Road (dated 1892-97), the development of Test Road, and terraced cottages north and west of the centre near the railways. There was little development south of the river until the late 19th/early 20th century. There have been large areas of modern development beyond the historic core, especially to the north.

Whitchurch has grown slightly to the west during the early 21st century, with more significant future housing allocations likely to infill the land between the village and A34 corridor. Post new development the A34 will form a strong linear boundary to the village.

### Whitchurch Key Characteristics

- Developed within valley form at the convergence of five roads.
- Historic core, including conservation area, characterised by narrow streets, with continuous built frontages and mix of materials.
- Central market space with town hall and coaching inn.
- Traditional materials comprising timber frame, brick and flint, stucco and brick.
- Semi-detached houses in London Street with the white chalk cliff behind (site of Whiting Works).
- Visual landmarks: town hall, silk mill and church spire.
- Key historic features: the church, representing the core of an earlier settlement; mills, representing old industries; railway arches; the town hall and other old buildings.
- Strong tree belts within settlement, e.g. down the hill from the station, and behind London Street.
- Important open floodplain landscape to the south, across water meadows.
- Strong visual and physical 'edges' to the town to the north, east and west, provided by topography, strong vegetation structure and man-made barriers, e.g. roads and railways. 'Edge' less well-defined to the south.
- Built development well-integrated on northern, eastern and southern sides, with little adverse impact on surrounding attractive rural landscapes.
- 'Fringe' characteristics evident in the landscape on the western side of the town between the railway and the A34.

### Whitchurch Landscape Setting

Whitchurch lies within the Test Valley landform, which significantly influences its form and character. To the north and south-east lies the predominantly semi-enclosed chalkland landscape, becoming more open to the south.

### Northern Setting and Edge

From the northern edge of the town the landscape gently slopes away northwards, with no distinct ridgeline to form a visual setting boundary. However, the east-west running railway line, with wooded embankments, creates a definite physical and visual man-made barrier between the northern limits of built form, and the wider landscape beyond. Entrance into Whitchurch across the railway bridge is relatively abrupt. No development has taken place to the north of the railway line, and the wooded nature of the embankments, and strong hedgerow structure within the landscape to the north, leads to the settlement having little visual influence on the surrounding rural landscape.

### Eastern Setting and Edge

To the east, the open east-west river valley and the narrow, steep-sided valleys that run perpendicular to the main river, create an undulating landform which (together with small woodland blocks and hedgerows) forms a complex visual setting. The landscape is one of large, relatively open arable fields on upper valley slopes, becoming more enclosed with pasture land and ribbons of woodland with in valley bottoms. The eastern edge of the settlement has developed along a spur of higher ground and south facing slopes. The urban form has been softened by trees, which screen and integrate it effectively into the surrounding rural landscape, and landform minimises its visual influence. Entrance into the settlement travelling along the B3400 is gradual, with glimpses of the village and outlying buildings hinting at its presence.



### Southern Setting and Edge

To the south, landform slopes up from the relatively wide valley floor to an open ridgeline in the south, which forms a more simple setting boundary to the town. Consistent views of the settlement can be seen from this more open landscape. Large, open arable fields, with low hedgerows and few woodland blocks, are characteristic on higher ground, becoming more enclosed by tree-lined hedgerows and landform to the south-east. A finger of modern housing has developed along Micheldever Road, encroaching into the open, arable landscape. Garden hedges and trees currently help to mitigate the abrupt change from open arable to linear modern housing development along Micheldever Road, although allocated and permitted development to the south-west will extend the urban form further into the countryside. The river flood-plain is a valuable feature within Whitchurch, making a vital contribution to its distinct sense of place. The entrance into Whitchurch from the A34 runs northwards along the fairly open valley floor, with housing along the east of the road, and views across the water meadows and floodplain vegetation to the west, creating a gradual and attractive transition into the town. Much of this area to the west is part of the 'Millennium Green'.

### Western Setting and Edge

The setting to the west of Whitchurch is defined by the large woodland blocks of Cowdown Copse and Hurstbourne Park and a gently rising landform to the north-west. The A34 and the wooded disused railway line form two 'edges' to the west of the settlement. The wooded disused railway line forms a barrier to the main body of the settlement. However, this edge has been breached by encroaching employment and housing development along the roadways towards the A34, which is built on a fairly open embankment and forms a second physical and visual barrier. The A34 and disused railway line also create bridged gateways into the settlement. The entrance to the south of Hurstbourne Park is a transition from parkland to the church and the older section of the settlement, creating a distinct sense of place. The entrance from Boswood Lane is more abrupt, passing under the A34 alongside new housing development, and exposing linear views over the settlement. The landscape to the west of the town is characterised by large arable fields with little hedgerow structure, large woodland blocks and the wooded edge of Hurstbourne Park. An area of rough ground and allotments lies along the north-western edge, adjacent to the industrial units and railway lines and introduces 'urban-fringe' characteristics. Fields are still evident between the railway line and the A34, but built development has fragmented and compromised its integrity, and eroded its character.

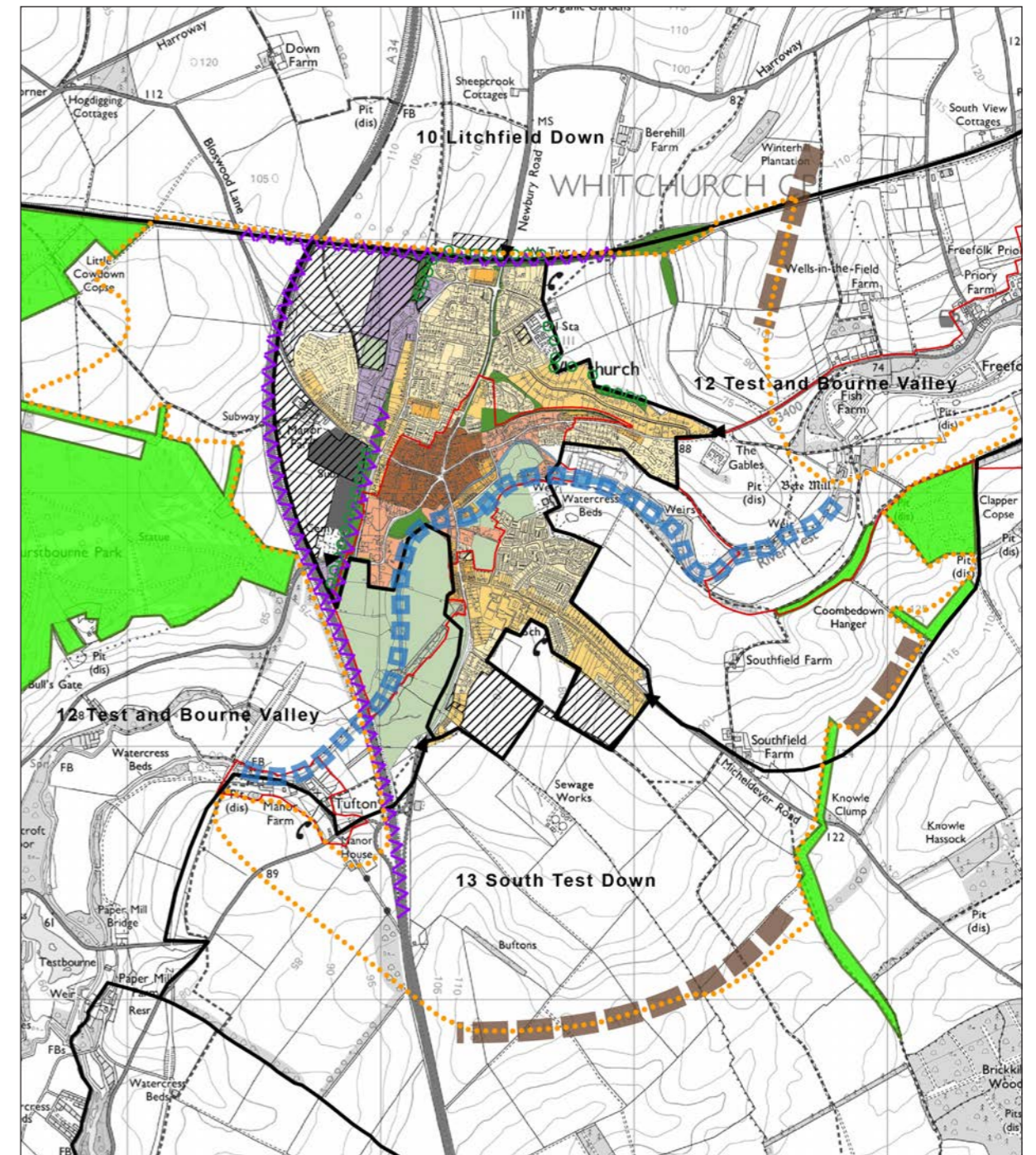


Figure 12 Whitchurch Landscape Setting and Settlement Character

| KEY |  | Settlement Character: |  |
|-----|--|-----------------------|--|
|     | Character area boundary                  |                       | Historic urban core                      |
|     | River corridor/floodplain                |                       | Historic area with rural characteristics |
|     | Prominent ridgelines                     |                       | Post Medieval -19th century expansion    |
|     | Prominent woodland blocks                |                       | Linear 20th century expansion            |
|     | Soft well integrated edge                |                       | 20th century housing estates             |
|     | Strong linear boundary                   |                       | 21st century housing estates             |
|     | View from high points                    |                       | Modern industrial development            |
|     | Approximate visual setting to settlement |                       | Modern office/retail development         |
|     | Separation between Settlements           |                       | Woodland within urban area               |
|     | Key approach/gateway                     |                       | Open space within urban area             |
|     | Conservation area boundary               |                       | Landscape road corridors                 |
|     | Permitted/allocated                      |                       |  |

### **Whitchurch Settlement Character**

Whitchurch retains the air of a small country town, with a compact centre, formed by the five main streets that meet in the central market place. From the 19th century housing has developed beyond the historic core, firstly as linear development along the main roads, then with more recent housing estates and culs-de-sac between these radial routes.

The historic core consists of streets with continuous built frontages of various dates. The individual buildings make use of traditional materials, with timber frame for the earliest buildings, such as 31 Newbury Street. Some old timber framed buildings survive behind later facades, the old framework being visible in end walls. Brick became the main material from the 17th century. Brick and flint is sometimes used, especially for garden walls. The Town Hall, with its bell turret, is a prominent landmark, marking the central crossroads and market area. Smaller groups of early 19th century terraced cottages can be found away from the main core.

The area around the church, to the south-west of the town centre, forms an historic area of distinctive rural character within the low-lying ground by the river. Although probably representing the original Saxon settlement, in townscape terms the area is significant for a number of large houses in large grounds, eg The Lawn, Haverhill and Kings Lodge. Open spaces form an important element within this area. Walls surround the wooded area opposite The Mount, while a cottage ornée forms a lodge to The Mount. The church spire is a major landmark in views of the town, but is screened from the west by trees. The railway arch forms a distinct gateway to the settlement when entering from the west. This area has a strongly rural character, enhanced by the old 17th century granary and the cricket ground, which is surrounded by tree belts. Other areas of this type include clusters of old buildings around the three mills, and a group of old buildings on the southern approach to the town.

Areas of late 19th century housing can be seen in various parts of the town, most distinctively along the eastern end of London Street. Ten pairs of brick houses were built here between 1892-97 on the site of the Whiting Works, located within the chalk pits. Other areas include terraced housing in Test Road and Oakland Road.

Linear development of the 1930s and later, lies along Winchester Road, Micheldever Road to the south-east, Lynch Hill Park behind the London Road and Evingar Road. This is low density development of medium-sized detached houses in individual plots.

Post War residential development occurs around the town. The northern part of the town, adjoining the railway line, is 1950s local authority housing, comprising houses built of brick with plain tile roofs and fairly large gardens. Strong tree belts conceal much of the development from the main Newbury Road. A similar area includes The Knowlings, to the south-east of the town. More recent housing development includes Kings Walk, built in the 1970s/80s, within mature tree planting. The most recent housing is on the eastern and western extremities of the town.

Modern housing development, and industrial development characterised by large-scale buildings and car parking, has occurred to the west of the town beyond the old Didcot to Winchester railway, which forms a strong tree belt.

### **Whitchurch Conservation and Enhancement Priorities**

- Conserve and enhance the river floodplain, retaining its character and vital contribution to settlement character.
- Conserve and enhance screening and landscape value of strong vegetation along railway line, on the northern settlement boundary.
- Enhance the entrance into the town from the west along Blosswood Lane, and encourage enhancement of industrial sites and land between the railway and A34.
- Encourage further tree planting along the eastern and southern urban edge, to further integrate the built form into the landscape.
- Conserve all internal open space, including woodland, playing fields and allotments.
- Conserve existing trees that screen development to each side of Newbury Street.
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the Whitchurch Conservation Area.
- Ensure design of any new development reflects the character of its surroundings, eg use of traditional materials and building styles.

## 6 OVERTON

### Origins and Historical Development

Overton is located within the distinct valley landscape of the River Test, mid-way between the main settlements of Andover and Basingstoke. The main body of the settlement has built up on valley slopes to the south of the river, with the church and new development to the north.

It is supposed that the earliest settlement was centred on the church, on the north side of the valley. The grant of a market charter in 1218 may represent the foundation of the present development south of the river. The medieval layout can be seen in the wide main street, with back lanes to service the burgage plots to the east and west. In the 19th century these back lanes were developed with small cottages, for example Red Lion Lane.

Sheep farming appears to have been important to the local economy, even before Overton became an important sheep market in the 14th century. The fortunes of the settlement fluctuated during the 16th and 17th centuries. During the 18th century the silk factory and Laverstoke Mill provided employment, and the village became an important staging post on the road from London to the south-west, until the Andover to Basingstoke railway was opened in 1845, diminishing the stagecoach trade.

The development of the village relates to its strategic location on a coaching route from London, and employment generated by the river. Mills have existed here from the time of the Domesday Book, and silk production was introduced in the 18th century. Paper making is still carried out just to the north of the village.

Several deserted and shrunken medieval villages, including Northington, Quidhampton, Polhampton, Laverstoke and Southington, lie along the line of the valley to the east and west of Overton. The fortunes of these villages may be a direct consequence of Overton's growth. Linear 20th century development extends along Greyhound Lane to the west of the old core, along Station Road to the north, and also to the south. Cul-de-sac development now fills in some of the open spaces between the old lanes, and has also spread into parts of the old burgage plots.

### Overton Key Characteristics

- Developed within the meandering River Test floodplain and valley slopes.
- Floodplain character forms important space within settlement.
- Development reflects the industry of a river valley: water mills, watercress beds, flood pasture etc.
- Key landmarks, including the church spire and Overton Mill with flags and chimneys.
- Attractive urban core, with central focal point and landmark (Library), set within a conservation area.
- Use of traditional materials including timber frame, brick, flint, plain clay roofing tiles, thatch.
- Tree-lined main street.
- Railway line to north, forming a strong linear barrier in the landscape.
- Predominantly soft urban edge particularly on lower valley slopes.

### Overton Landscape Setting

Overton has developed within the east-west meandering River Test floodplain and extends up northern and southern slopes, creating an introverted settlement form. The northern chalkland landscape is open and relatively exposed, whilst to the south of the valley, woodland blocks create a semi-enclosed setting to the village. Communication links with the northern and southern downlands are clearly seen. Numerous roads, including Dellands Lane and Vinn Lane, create a series of rectilinear units of land, suggesting these routes may have historically formed part of a larger lane/path network, serving the surrounding open fields.

### Northern Setting and Edge

From the northern edges of the settlement the landform slopes away gently up to the north, forming an undulating landform with distant ridgelines. The northern part of the settlement is divided into two main blocks of built form, to the west of the church and to the south of Overton Mill. These two areas are separated by a small sloping, dry valley form, with relatively open arable and pasture fields, creating a less definable, more fragmented settlement edge. The edge to the west of the church is defined by the school and a modern housing estate. The angular and relatively hard edge of the housing is partially mitigated by hedgerow planting and tree vegetation within the school grounds. The railway line forms a linear boundary along the most northerly edge of the settlement which, in places, has high tree cover, forming a visual and physical barrier to the landscape beyond. Overton Mill has breached this linear boundary, but surrounding mature tree planting helps to mitigate visibility of the main building from the northern landscape.

The prehistoric trackway, the Harrow Way, passes through the parish to the north of the village. This formed one of the principal routes to and from the south-west, and was later used as a pilgrims route towards London. Entrance along the B3051 from the north is relatively abrupt. Although there are distant views of the settlement, the railway line, landform and bands of tree planting, prevent closer views until crossing the railway bridge. Once over the bridge there is an important vista across the village to development in the south, including views of St Mary's church spire. The dry valley to the west of the B3051, and south of the railway, forms part of the northern setting to the church.

### Eastern Setting and Edge

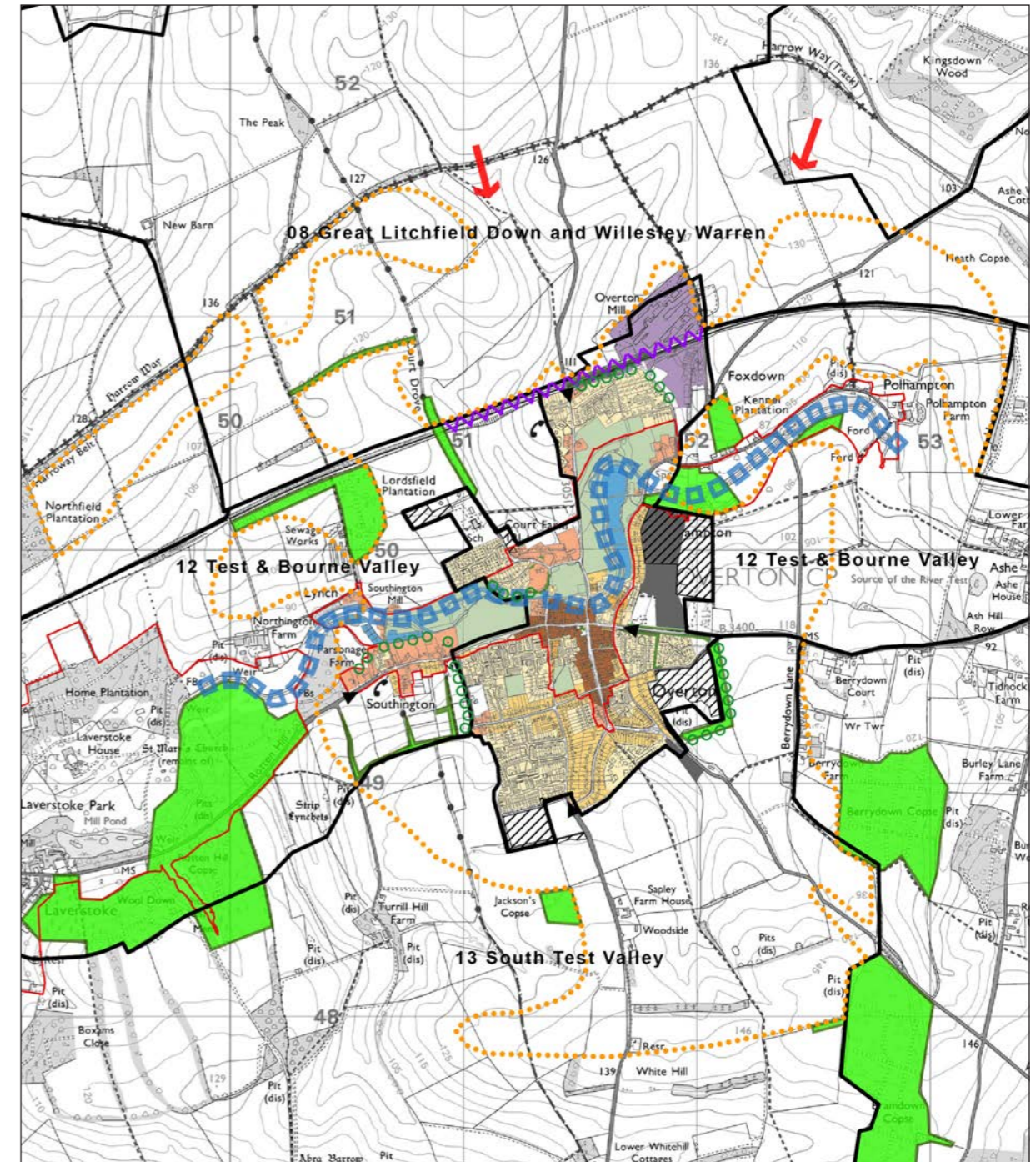
The eastern setting of the boundary is defined by valley slopes and the enclosed, relatively wide, valley floor to the north of the river. The eastern edge and sewage works are well-integrated into the landscape, with woodland blocks and high hedgerows screening views in and out. The settlement edge between the river and the B3400 is relatively straight, with recent housing development. To the south of the B3400 the settlement edge is more defined, with hedgerows and tree cover blending the urban form into the landscape. Dense hedgerow planting along the B3400 restricts views of the village until reaching the first crossroads. A tunnelled view of the village down the road provides a gateway into the settlement.

### Southern Setting and Edge

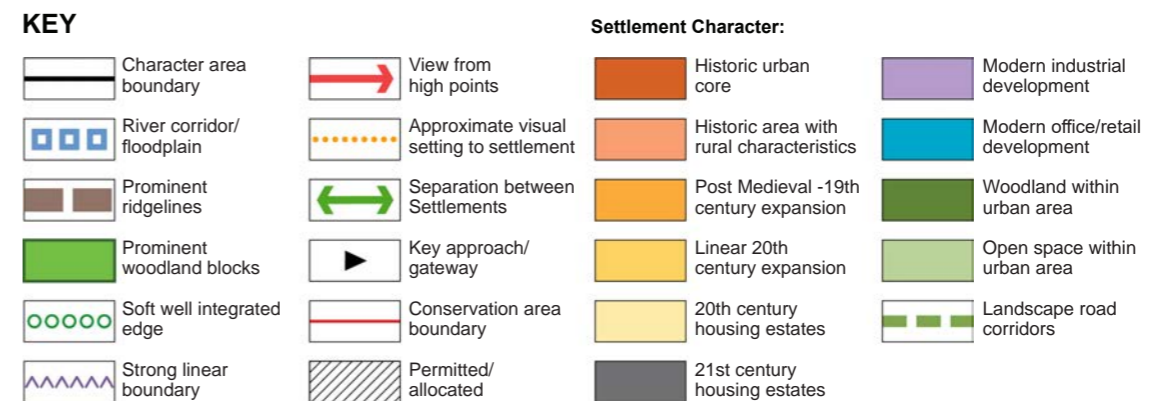
From the southern edge of the village the landform slopes up gently southward to a ridgeline, containing views to and from the settlement within the valley form. Urban form along the edge is compact and contained, forming a relatively straight and distinct edge to the settlement. Linear screening bands of tree planting form the interface between the modern housing and predominantly arable, medium to large-scale landscape beyond. Entrance into the settlement from the south is relatively abrupt, with little indication, either through views or outlying buildings, of the settlement presence. Once in the village, views across the valley can be seen with the church spire and Overton Mill forming focal points in the distance.

**Western Setting and Edge**

The western setting of the settlement is defined by the valley sides, including steep slopes to the south, and relatively wide, enclosed valley floor which (through landform and high tree cover on lower valley slopes) contains views in and out of the settlement. The definite settlement edge of the south continues on the high slopes to the south west of the settlement. Here, the tree structure is more informal than to the south, allowing views in and out of the settlement. Hedgerow planting softens this abrupt interface with the open arable land-scape. Fields become smaller, predominantly pasture and more enclosed on lower valley slopes. Within the valley floor and lower valley slopes, the 'edge' of the settlement becomes more fragmented and integrated into the land-scape by tree cover. Entrance into Overton from the west along the B3400 is gradual, passing through the historic and less dense form of Southington, before entering the more compact and enclosed urban form of Overton.



**Figure 13 Overton Landscape Setting and Settlement Character**



### **Overton Settlement Character**

The historic core consists of continuous built frontages along the High Street and Winchester Street, which meet at the central crossroads. A central focus is provided by the old Victorian school (now used as a library and community centre) built of brick and flint. The wide main street is lined with trees. Buildings are of local materials, including timber frame, brick and flint, while roofing materials include plain clay tile, slate and thatch.

The church lies across the valley, away from the urban centre. Its walls are of local flint under a great sweep of clay tiled roof, while its shingle spire is a landmark. The church, old rectory and Park Farm, form a group of rural character, enhanced by the river valley landscape with its open spaces, which separates it from the village. Other old areas of rural character, with good old building groups of local materials, can be seen at Southington in the river valley to the west of Overton.

Some small-scale development took place along the old back lanes in the 19th century, consisting of brick terraces, and there is another 19th century terrace on the road towards the station.

20th century linear development has taken place along the roads running up from the valley to the north and south of the village. There is local authority housing just to the east of the centre. Other cul-de-sac development has taken place within the grid of the old back lanes, including some fairly high density housing within the old burgage plots, just behind Winchester Street. Two areas of modern housing lie across the valley next to the old rectory and Overton Mill.

### **Overton Conservation and Enhancement Priorities**

- Retain rural character of river valley.
- Conserve natural setting of the settlement, defined by valley slopes and woodland blocks, discouraging development from crossing these natural edges.
- Strengthen and encourage new tree planting along the railway to the north of the village.
- Retain identity of Southington, by preventing coalescence with Overton.
- Retain recreational and open land along the western edge of Overton (near Southington), recognising its important setting and amenity value.
- Retain areas of important open space.
- Conserve and manage important screening bands of tree planting around Overton Mill, and along the edge of the settlement.
- Retain woodland and copse areas within the setting of Overton, in particular Kennel Plantation, Berrydown Copse, Brandown Copse, Jackson's Copse and Lordsfield Plantation.
- Retain and enhance urban character of old centre.
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the Overton Conservation Area.
- Ensure design of any new development reflects the character of its surroundings, eg use of traditional materials and building styles.

## 7 KINGSCLERE

### Origins and Historical Development

Kingsclere is located in the north-west of the Borough, approximately three miles south of the Hampshire/Berkshire county border.

The settlement appears to have been an important royal estate and is mentioned in the will of King Alfred (c880 AD). It is also mentioned in the Domesday Book. A market was formed in 1154, and the area immediately to the north of the church served as a market place. The historic core of the town lies around the church, with burgage plots found in Swan Street and George Street.

Three factors led to the development of Kingsclere: a convergence of routes which connect the larger settlements of Newbury, Basingstoke and Overton, together with the proximity of the river, and its location within a surrounding agricultural area. The market formed the focus of the settlement from early times – it was granted a charter in 1154 – and seems to have been held on the area to the east of the church where the two main streets meet. Mills and other industries were located along the river course. A number of buildings surviving from the late medieval period is evidence of early prosperity, probably founded on the wool trade. Other industries included malting and chalk excavation.

During the 17th century there was only limited growth, possibly because Kingsclere was badly affected by the plague epidemic of 1665-66. From the 18th century some development took place at the entrance to the chalk quarry (known as The Dell). These were squatters' cottages, the homes of some of the poorest inhabitants of Kingsclere. There was expansion in the 19th century, beyond the medieval confines, along Swan Street and George Street. Several large houses were also constructed on the periphery of the settlement at this time. Most of the 20th century expansion has taken the form of cul-de-sac development off the Basingstoke, Newbury and Tadley roads.

### Kingsclere Key Characteristics

- Few key landmarks visible in the settlement from surrounding landscape.
- South-north flowing stream flows through the settlement, with tree-lined banks.
- Central focal point of church, war memorial and market area, set within a conservation area.
- Good building groups, especially in North Street, the mill, and around the church.
- Use of traditional materials, including timber frame, brick, flint, plain tile hanging and plain clay tiles.
- Attractive streetscape with vista to the downland scarp.
- Set within a varied landscape, enclosed to the north, open to the south.
- Strong visual influence of east-west running scarp face to the south.
- Park House Stables and associated gallops and horse pasture dominant land use between the scarp and southern edge of settlement.
- Predominantly soft, well-integrated edge to the settlement.

### Kingsclere Landscape Setting

Kingsclere lies at the junction between the chalkland landscape to the south and clay landscape to the north. The use of the landscape reflects this difference in geology, and creates a diverse setting to the settlement. As a whole, the settlement is generally well-integrated into the landscape, with substantial tree cover (both in and surrounding the village) breaking up its urban form, and integrating it into the rural landscape.

### Northern Setting and Edge

The setting to the north-east of the settlement is formed by steep slopes rising away from the village, which (along with dense woodlands and relatively small fields enclosed by a strong hedgerow structure) creates a distinct and contained setting boundary. The golf course located to the north-east has little visual impact on the settlement, due to intervening woodland cover. Nineteenth century tithe maps identify this northern landscape as comprising irregular, enclosed fields and a large area of common, with several dispersed hamlets and farmsteads situated near to common land.

The landscape to the north-west is more subdued and gently undulating, with numerous small streams, forming a less definable setting with no distinct landform to contain views of the settlement. Fields are larger than to the north-east and predominantly arable. The setting boundary is mainly defined by hedgerows (some tree-lined) which, due to the fairly flat nature of the landscape, is effective in containing views.

The A339 with associated scrub and tree planting forms a distinct linear boundary. Built development does not directly abut the A339 corridor but is separated from it by a narrow ribbon of scrubby grassland and pasture along the route of a stream.

### Eastern Setting and Edge

The eastern landscape is defined by medium to large-scale, predominantly arable fields with woodland blocks and undulating landform, which act to contain views of the settlement. Although panoramic views of the settlement are possible from high ground on Plantation Hill (which forms a distinct ridgeline to the south-east) tree cover and landform restrict views from many other parts of the eastern landscape. The eastern edge of the settlement has a very pointed form, created by the A339 and minor road running into Kingsclere.

### Southern Setting and Edge

The setting to the south and south-west of Kingsclere is dominated by the distinct east-west running scarp face. This forms a definite ridgeline from which panoramic views of the landscape and settlement can be seen. The landscape between the scarp and the settlement was historically laid out as downland and arable open fields, the strips of which are illustrated on 19th century tithe maps. This character is still largely maintained today, with open, large-scale arable fields, gallops and related horse pasture land. Fields become smaller and slightly more enclosed in close proximity to the settlement, but contrast between the open landscape and village form is apparent.

The southern edge of the settlement is relatively contained and abrupt with straight, angular boundaries. Tree and hedgerow planting acts to soften much of the edge although some localised, more open, harder edges allow views in and out of the settlement. Entrance to the settlement from the south is fairly gradual, with views of the settlement's and outlying properties announcing its presence. Smaller-scale pasture fields associated with Park House Stables also edge the road, giving a more gentle transition in scale from large, open arable fields to small village form.

### Western Setting and Edge

To the west, the gently undulating landform, hedgerow structure and woodland blocks create a more fragmented and less well-defined setting boundary. This boundary becomes more defined to the south-west, where higher ground at Bishops Hill and Isle Hill creates minor, containing ridgelines. Mature tree cover screens much of the western edge of Kingsclere, filtering views in and out of the settlement, and creating a soft, wooded edge to the village. Three routes enter the village from the west. The main A339 allows a gradual transition into the northwest of the village, with a number of urban influences (i.e. garage, restaurant/pub) developing out along this relatively busy route. The entrance along Echinswell Road is also fairly gradual, passing the cemetery and farm buildings, before entering the village itself. Views of the village from this road are limited by mature hedgerows/banks and tree cover. The entrance from Sydmonton is more abrupt, although minor views from Isle Hill alert the road user to the village's presence.

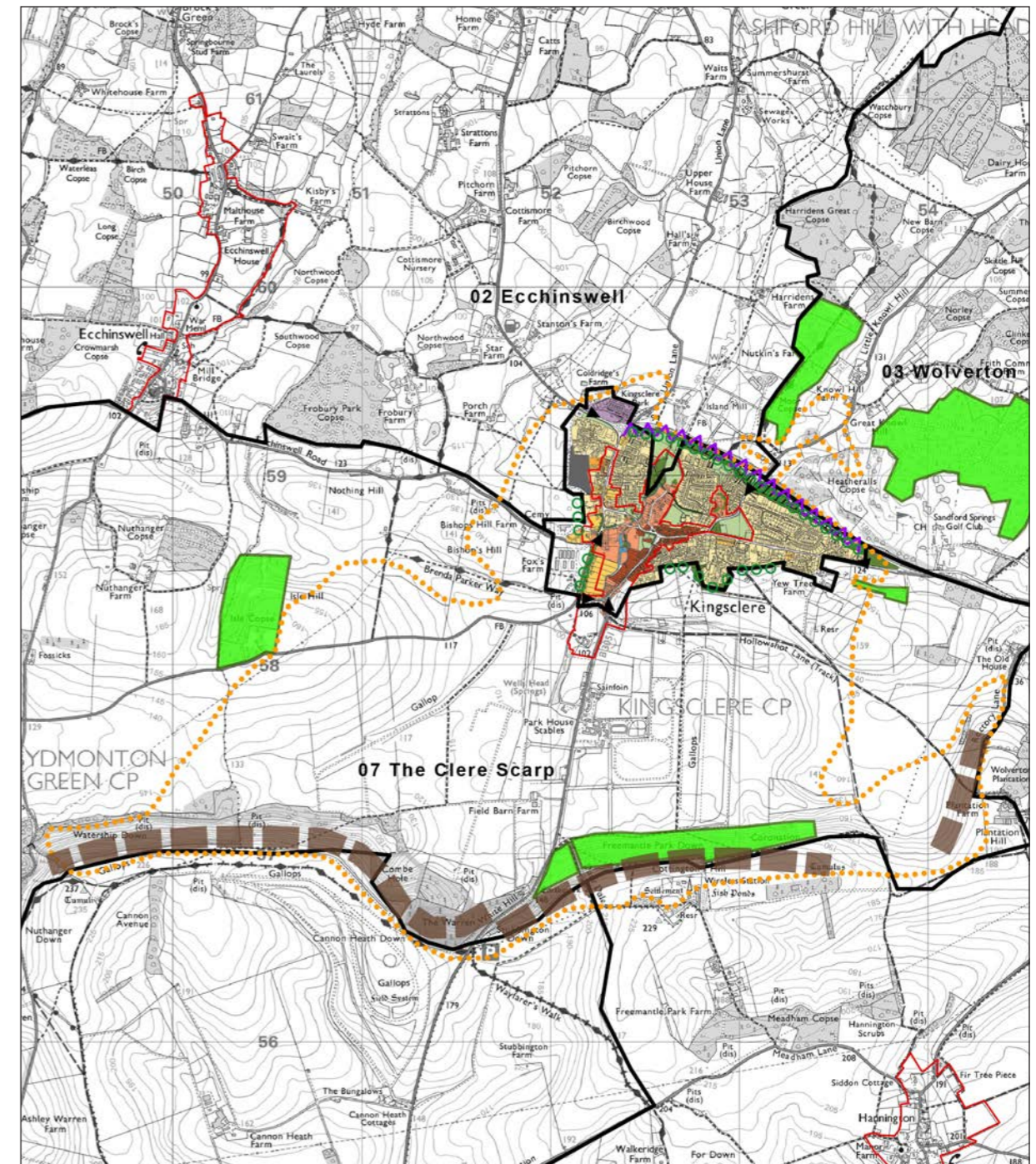


Figure 14 Kingsclere Landscape Setting and Settlement Character

#### KEY

|  |                           |  |  |  |  |  |                                  |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
|  | Character area boundary   |  | View from high points                    |  | Historic urban core                      |  | Modern industrial development    |
|  | River corridor/floodplain |  | Approximate visual setting to settlement |  | Historic area with rural characteristics |  | Modern office/retail development |
|  | Prominent ridgelines      |  | Separation between Settlements           |  | Post Medieval -19th century expansion    |  | Woodland within urban area       |
|  | Prominent woodland blocks |  | Key approach/gateway                     |  | Linear 20th century expansion            |  | Open space within urban area     |
|  | Soft well integrated edge |  | Conservation area boundary               |  | 20th century housing estates             |  | Landscape road corridors         |
|  | Strong linear boundary    |  | Permitted/allocated                      |  | 21st century housing estates             |  |                                  |

### **Kingsclere Settlement Character**

Kingsclere has a compact centre, with old buildings around the church, war memorial and central market place. Substantial 20th century development has spread beyond this core, especially to the east (along the Basingstoke Road) and the north.

The historic core includes George Street and Swan Street, which have continuous built frontages of various dates. The buildings are of traditional materials, with timber frame for the earliest buildings, of which No. 1 Newbury Road is a prominent example. Many timber framed buildings survive behind later facades, their frame-work visible in side walls. Brick walling includes a variety of mellow colours from dark red to orange, while brick patterning includes the use of grey headers with red brick dressings around windows. The churchyard, with its boundary of pollarded lime trees, is an important central open space, and the church, with its squat Norman tower, is a prominent landmark, marking the centre of the settlement.

Historic areas with a rural character include North Street, Elm Grove, and Newbury Road/Fox Lane, which form the western fringe of the historic settlement. They are characterised by a less concentrated built form, with open spaces between buildings and groups of buildings. Trees and woodland belts form important features, especially along the river valley.

1930s and later linear development have taken place along the Newbury Road, the Basingstoke Road and the upper part of Fox's Lane.

Post-war residential development, in the form of culs-de-sac and housing estates, has taken place to the north, east and south of the settlement. It includes the ex-local authority housing in the Coppice Road area, with brick semi-detached and short terrace housing. A large area of housing between Newbury Road and North Street was developed in the 1960s, and includes a riverside path and a well-treed open space at the entrance to the estate.

### **Kingsclere Conservation and Enhancement Priorities**

- Conserve ribbon of scrub and tree planting between the A339 and urban form of Kingsclere, retaining and enhancing its landscape and biodiversity value.
- Conserve and manage prominent woodlands and bands of trees, which contribute to the setting and screening of the village.
- Encourage enhancement of transition into the village along the A339 from the north, discouraging sprawl of inappropriate development along its route.
- Retain visual links with the scarp from within the settlement to the south.
- Conserve wooded footpath links.
- Retain and enhance internal open spaces, especially in the historic rural character type.
- Retain and manage mature vegetation which follows the course of Gaily Brook and around Priors Mill.
- Retain and manage line of pollarded trees, which define the boundary of the churchyard.
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the Kingsclere Conservation Area.
- Ensure design of any new development reflects the character of its surroundings, eg use of traditional materials and building styles.



## 8 OLD BASING

### Origins and Historical Development

Old Basing is located in the east of the Borough on the south-eastern banks of the River Loddon which separates the village from Basingstoke.

The village was an important manorial centre in Saxon times, and the church may be on the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster. At one time more important than Basingstoke, it had already relatively diminished by the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086.

Old Basing House was built in the 16th century on the site of the medieval Basing Castle, in the south-west corner of the old village. The house was destroyed in the Civil War, although its ruined brick walls remain. Oliver's Battery, north-east of the village, may have been the site of a still earlier castle.

Old Basing has an irregular street pattern of narrow lanes, which have developed through medieval and post-medieval times, with many attractive old houses between the church and Old Basing House. Post-medieval houses along the roadside to the north of the centre, may represent what were originally squatters' cottages, built on roadside verges. The River Loddon was important for fish, and also supported a watercress industry. The baskets for taking the cress to market were made in the village.

Between 1778-1794 the Basingstoke Canal was built through the grounds of Old Basing House to link Basingstoke to London, but it does not seem to have had much economic effect on the village. Parts of it remain to form the eastern boundary of the settlement. The railway cut through the middle of Old Basing in 1838 and opened in 1839, but again this did not provide any stimulus for growth. In the 20th century residential development has extended right out to, and along, the A30.

### Old Basing Key Characteristics

- Strongly influenced by enclosed river Loddon floodplain and built form of Basingstoke.
- Meadows between village and river, with riverside footpath.
- Visual focal points within settlement: informal clusters of old buildings e.g. at junction of Milkingpen Lane with The Street, railway arch, Basing House.
- Conservation area and major historic buildings, e.g. church, tithe barn.
- Brick walls and ruins of Basing House.
- Use of traditional materials – especially brick, timber frame and thatch.
- Intricate pattern of old lanes.
- Post-war housing development to south.
- East-west running railway line cuts through settlement.
- Strongly wooded boundary, edged by remnant of the canal.
- Basingstoke Common, important space to south-west of village.

### Old Basing Landscape Setting

Old Basing is strongly influenced by the River Loddon which forms the north-west boundary to the settlement. To the north, the landscape is one of mixed farmland and woodland, whilst to the south, the relatively open chalkland landscape is dominant. This, together with the valley floor and the influences of Basingstoke, creates a varied setting to the settlement.

### Northern Setting and Edge

The south-facing slopes and valley form of the River Loddon, and development in Basingstoke, define the northern setting to Old Basing, the low lying landform limiting intervisibility between the northern edge and the surrounding landscape. To the north-east is an area of open land known as the Loddon Valley Open Space.

The northern edge of the settlement is partly fragmented, predominantly defined by the enclosed valley floodplain. A small linear band of housing has developed within the floodplain, along a road joining Old Basing to Basingstoke. This development blurs the boundary between Basingstoke and Old Basing at this point. However, further to the south, the division and edge of Old Basing is more clearly defined by the floodplain. The north-west edge is clearly marked by the wooded railway line, which acts as a physical and visual barrier.

### Eastern Setting and Edge

The setting to the east of Old Basing is characterised by north-east sloping mixed arable and pasture fields, and blocks of woodland on higher ground, adjacent to the railway line. This landscape structure limits views of the majority of the settlement from the east, although new development on the southern edge of Old Basing is visible. The eastern edge of the settlement is well-defined by the former canal and a mature, thick band of tree planting, which limits intervisibility between the settlement and the landscape, and helps integrating the urban form into the surrounding landscape.

### Southern Setting and Edge

To the south, the relatively open, arable landscape gently slopes up southwards to distant and indistinct wooded ridgelines. This creates a fragmented setting to the settlement. Due to the Loddon Valley form, very little of the village would be visible from the southern landscape. However, new housing, between the A30 and M3, has broken this natural landform edge, extending intervisibility to the southern landscape. The linear east-west running M3 corridor, within embankment cuttings, creates a definite physical man-made barrier between the southern limits of the built form and the open landscape beyond. This forms a distinct edge to the settlement. Mature tree planting and lower lying landform along the south-eastern edge of the village integrate development into the landscape, hiding the majority of built form from southern viewpoints. The new housing to the south-west forms a hard edge which, due to lack of mature planting and its position on a ridge-line, makes it visible from the south.

### Western Setting and Edge

The western setting of Old Basing is defined and confined by the Loddon Valley, Basingstoke Common and the visual presence of Basingstoke beyond. The edge of the settlement has developed on the valley slope extending from relatively high ground in the south-west, to the valley floor to the north.

The south-western edge of the village is clearly defined by Park Lane and the open grassland area of Basingstoke Common. The common has park-like characteristics and is edged along the roadside by post and wire fencing and individual trees. Garden hedgerows etc help to soften this boundary. However, views to and from Basingstoke significantly affect the character of the western setting. To the north-west, the settlement edge becomes more fragmented and enclosed within the valley floor and lower slopes. An increase in tree and scrubby vegetation cover also integrates and softens the settlement edge.

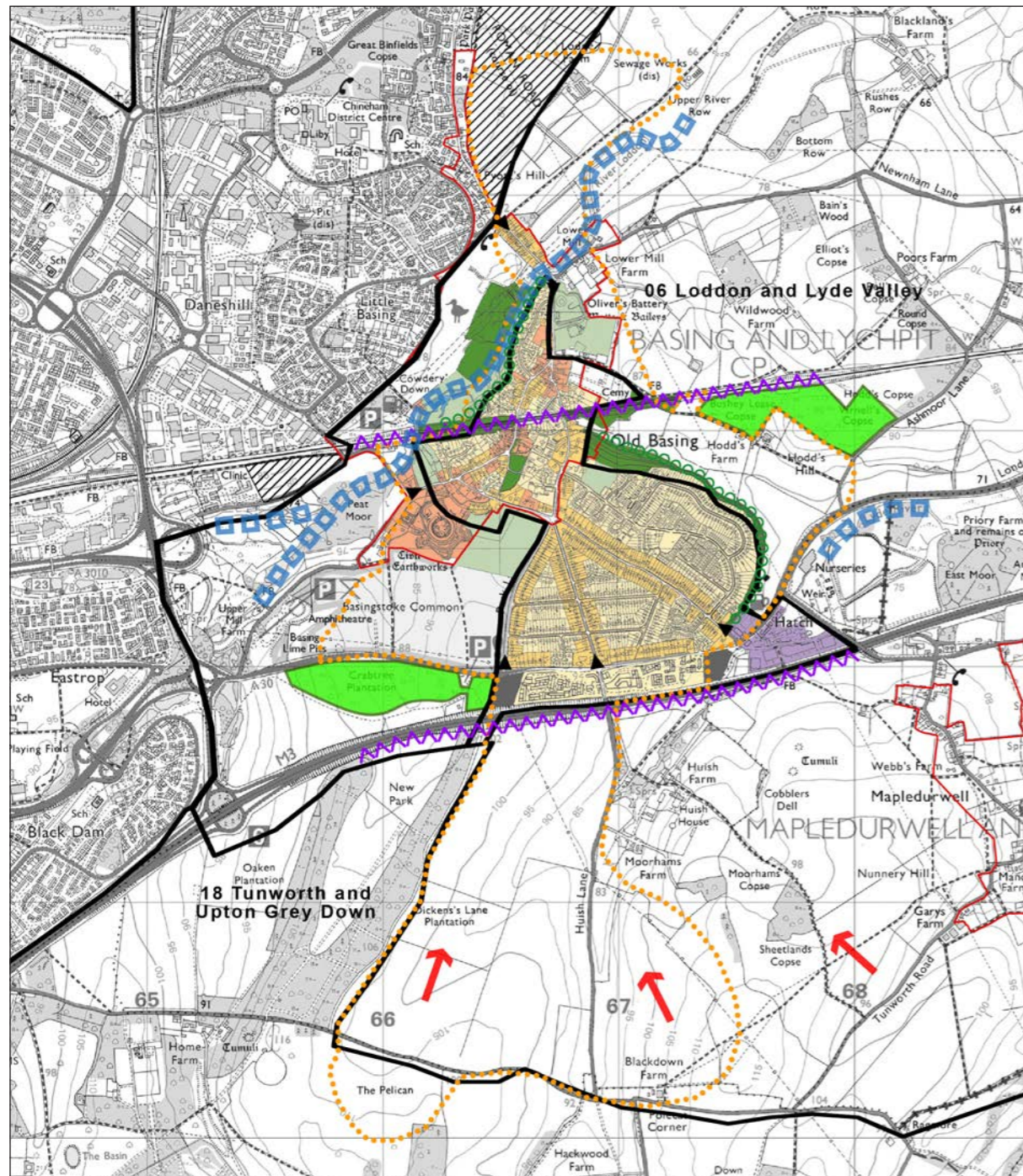


Figure 15 Old Basing Landscape Setting and Settlement Character

**KEY**

|                           |  |  |                                  |
|---------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Character area boundary   | View from high points                    | Historic urban core                      | Modern industrial development    |
| River corridor/floodplain | Approximate visual setting to settlement | Historic area with rural characteristics | Modern office/retail development |
| Prominent ridgelines      | Separation between Settlements           | Post Medieval -19th century expansion    | Woodland within urban area       |
| Prominent woodland blocks | Key approach/gateway                     | Linear 20th century expansion            | Open space within urban area     |
| Soft well integrated edge | Conservation area boundary               | 20th century housing estates             | Landscape road corridors         |
| Strong linear boundary    | Permitted/allocated                      | 21st century housing estates             |                                  |

**Old Basing Settlement Character**

There are some good groups of old buildings in Old Basing. The Street forms the main core, but there are other peripheral groups often clustered around road junctions or some other focal point. These buildings are of various dates from the 16th to the 19th centuries (with some modern infill). They include a few fine timber framed and thatched cottages together with the occasional weather-boarded barn, a terrace of 19th century cottages by the railway bridge, and an elegant stucco house.

There are many fine old brick buildings in Old Basing. Bricks are mostly of mellow orange, as in the impressive Tudor walls and gateway to Old Basing House (which were left in ruins after the Civil War) and are prominent in the west part of the village. There is also the 16th century tithe barn, with its arched doorways, ventilation slits and buttresses, and the adjoining 17th century farmhouse. An adjoining meadow forms part of the footpath link between Old Basing House and its car park, and is an unspoilt piece of open land within the village. Even the church was repaired in brick after severe damage caused in the Civil War.

The railway cuts right through the middle of the old village, carried over the roads by two bridges. These do not detract from the character, but frame views of The Street.

There has been much 20th century infill within this historic core, but most of the modern development has taken place up the hill, to the south of the old valley settlement, with linear development along the old roads leading south, and linking crossroads - all lined with individual houses of the 1950s-60s. These fill the area up to the A30. Further housing has just been completed to the south of the main road.

**Old Basing Conservation and Enhancement Priorities**

- Conserve and maintain Basingstoke Common, enhancing its ecological, landscape and amenity function.
- Conserve and enhance the Loddon floodplain to the north and west of the settlement, retaining its function as a natural edge and buffer between Old Basing and Basingstoke
- Encourage the creation and extension of species-rich grassland and other wetland habitats within the valley floor.
- Retain and manage mature tree planting and the route of the canal to the east of the settlement.
- Conserve important woodland blocks to the east and south-west of the settlement, retaining their important landscape and ecological role in the setting.
- Conserve and strengthen structure planting along the M3 corridor, retaining it as a strong southern edge.
- Retain important internal open spaces, most significantly to the east of the Tithe Barn, the churchyard, the junction of Milkingpen Lane and The Street and The Street and Church Lane.
- Enhance access to countryside wherever possible.
- Conserve and manage Scheduled Ancient Monuments and surrounding open space of Basing House and Oliver's Battery.
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the Old Basing conservation area.
- Ensure design of any new development reflects the character of its surroundings, eg use of traditional materials and building styles.

## 9 BRAMLEY AND BRAMLEY GREEN

### Origins and Historical Development

Bramley is located in the north east of the Borough some five miles to the north of Basingstoke. It lies at the junction of the Loddon and Lyde Valley and the North Sherborne character areas in gently undulating countryside.

The earliest evidence of settlement in the area is the Iron Age fort at Bullsdown, just to the east of the present village. The course of a Roman road from Silchester to Winchester runs through the western end of the village. However, in its present form Bramley originated in Saxon times, and is mentioned in the Domesday Book when it belonged to Hugh de Port, a major Hampshire land owner. It continued in this family until the 14th century. By the medieval period it consisted of a church and a number of farms and cottages loosely grouped around the church.

Bramley now forms a large village along the minor road from Sherfield on Loddon to Pamber End, but there are a number of old parts which, once isolated, have now been absorbed into the larger settlement. The historic focus of the settlement is the church at the western end of the village and the group of old buildings running south and east from it, including Church Farm, The Manor House and Gray's House which was the former Rectory.

A separate old settlement grew up around Bramley Green to the east, with the 16th century Beech Farm. A number of cottages have developed around the edges of this area of common land including the thatched Rose Cottage and the Barracks, an early 20th century terrace of cottages. In 1817 the village, as part of the Stratfield Saye Estate, was purchased by the nation to give to the Duke of Wellington in gratitude for the defeat of Napoleon.

In 1848 the railway was built from Reading to Basingstoke, passing between Bramley and Bramley Green, but it was not until 1895 that Bramley had its own station. There does not seem to have been much development as a result of this, but during the First World War a military depot was established for the building and storage of ammunition, served by the railway. The depot still exists.

In the 20th century the road alignment was altered in the old village core, to ease the movement of traffic through the village. Development since the 1930s at first took place along the main road, linking isolated farms into the settlement. From the 1950s local authority housing, in the form of estates, was built to the north east and the south west of the railway line. Fairly large scale housing areas have been built in the late 20th century to the west, south and east of Bramley Green.

Housing developments at the edges of the village have continued into the early 21st century, although these are relatively modest in scale, reflecting the smaller size of Bramley, when compared to the recent and proposed larger urban extensions of Basingstoke.

### Bramley and Bramley Green Key Characteristics

- Original historic core defined by landmark buildings, e.g. the church, Gray's House and the Manor House, within a conservation area at the western end of the village.
- Predominantly linear settlement form.
- Bramley Green to the east, forming an important open space, bounded by mature trees, and within a further conservation area.
- Visual focal points within the settlement: informal clusters of old buildings around the church, Bramley Green, and various old farm groups.
- Victorian estate character around junction of The Street and Vyne Road.
- Use of a variety of traditional building materials - timber frame, flint, brick, tile hanging, weather boarding, and plain clay tile, thatch and slate roofs.
- Linear early - mid 20th century development links various old groups of buildings.
- Late 20th century housing areas to west, south and east of Bramley Green, mostly concealed by mature tree belts.
- Located at the junction of three distinct and contrasting landscapes: open, large scale farmland to the north and east, smaller scale, more enclosed farmland to the south west and the enclosed, wooded Ministry of Defence land to the south.
- Southern edge of the settlement defined and enclosed by private woodland, forming a strong visual and physical barrier.
- Tree-covered Bullsdown Iron Age Plateau Fort on the eastern edge of Bramley Green, forming an important focal point when entering or exiting the settlement along Sherfield Road.
- Bramley Frith Wood forms a prominent landscape feature to the northwest of the settlement.
- Large steel pylons are a prominent feature within the landscape to the north of the settlement.
- Settlement generally well integrated into the surrounding landscape and visually contained by its position within the landform and surrounding vegetation.

### Bramley and Bramley Green Landscape Setting

Bramley and Bramley Green have a varied landscape setting lying at the junction of three distinct and contrasting landscapes. Open, large scale relatively flat farmland to the north (made up of two landscape types: 'open arable on clay' and 'open farmland and woodland') forms a stark contrast with the strongly wooded Ministry of Defence land that forms the southern setting to the village. Gently sloping, smaller fields and copses to the southwest form a semi-enclosed and textured landscape.

### North-Western Setting and Edge

The landscape to the north-west of the settlement is relatively flat, dominated by large scale, open, arable fields and woodland blocks/copses. Hedgerows vary from scrubby tree-lined boundaries to remnant hedgerows, marked only by low earthbanks and/or specimen trees. Minor undulations in the landform, along with the woodland blocks and the wooded edge of the settlement forms a relatively contained setting to the village. Fields are smaller in close proximity to the village and fields near St James's Church and Church Farm are used predominantly for horse pasture with some untidy, 'fringe' characteristics. Bramley Frith Wood is a dominant landscape feature to the northwest of the settlement and hides an electricity substation within its structure. The only hints to the sub-stations position are the large steel pylons that cross the northern landscape which themselves form a notable and detracting element within the area.

The majority of the north-western edge of the settlement is 'soft' and well integrated into the surrounding landscape due to substantial tree planting along the village edge and within the built form.

Entrance into Bramley from the west is gradual and rural, passing properties, set back from the road within a strong landscape structure before entering the settlement itself.

#### **North-Eastern Setting and Edge**

The north-eastern setting to the village is defined by a shallow, very gently sloping stream valley with large arable fields bound by predominantly low, trimmed hedgerows and individual hedgerow trees. Small copses, tree-lined roads and limited tree-lined hedgerows give some enclosure within a predominantly open, large scale landscape. A minor ridgeline between Holly Cross and Ladyland Copse contains the visual extent of the settlement and strongly defines its setting. Steel Pylons crossing the valley are a notable and detracting element within the area.

The north-eastern edge of the settlement varies in its enclosure and relationship with the surrounding landscape. The northern edge of the modern local authority housing has an untidy mix of clipped and low scrubby hedgerows with some individual hedgerow trees. Although this development does not have an integrated or soft edge, the flat landscape and treelined hedgerows to the north limits the extent of its visibility. The school is visible from the north but its single storey design and strong surrounding tree cover minimises its visual impact. The edge to the north and east of Tottenham Close is softened and screened by high hedgerow and tree planting. The edge of recent development off Centenary Fields is more open and the buildings are clearly visible when travelling westwards along Sherfield Road and from other eastern and northern viewpoints. The remaining settlement edge is defined by Sherfield Road and partly by Bramley Green. A strong landscape structure including treelined hedgerows and copses on the northern boundary and within the built form create a typically soft, integrated edge, although areas of new housing are visible from the north.

Entrance into Bramley from the east, along Sherfield Road, includes views of recently constructed houses located off Centenary Fields, signalling the village edge in the middle distance.

#### **Eastern Setting and Edge**

The eastern setting of the settlement is dominated by the Bull's Down Copse, the site of an Iron Age Fort that provides a strong historical and cultural link with the areas past. The copse lies at the junction of three large, very gently sloping arable fields edged to the south by a wooded stream corridor and to the north by Sherfield Road.

The eastern edge of the settlement is linear and well defined by a treelined hedgerow. Modern houses are clearly visible from the east, between the trees where the hedgerow becomes lower, however this is a brief view when travelling along Sherfield Road and overall the eastern edge is relatively soft and enclosed.

Bull's Down Copse forms an important landscape and archaeological feature at the eastern entrance/exit of the village.

#### **Southern Setting and Edge**

The landscape to the south of Bramley and Bramley Green is defined by gently undulating wooded, enclosed former Bramley Ordnance Depot. This is private land, which along with its enclosed wooded character forms a very strong visual and physical barrier along the southern edge of the settlement. The wooded ordnance depot land screens all views into and out of the settlement from the south resulting in a very contained visual setting.

Woodland abuts much of the settlement edge, tightly enclosing and defining its limits. The edge adjacent to Officers Row (eastern end) is slightly less contained with high wire fencing, the car park, water tower and buildings, and an open area of rough grassland forming a distinctly military landscape. Wire fencing and obvious evidence of the areas land use is also noticeable at the entrance to the depot opposite Bramley village hall. There is no access to or from the settlement, either vehicular or by foot, from the south.

#### **South-Western Setting and Edge**

From the south-western edge of the village the landscape slopes gently to the south, dominated by medium and small scale mixed pasture and arable fields and woodland/copse. Boundaries vary from tree lined hedgerows, particularly along roads and in the valley bottom, remnant hedgerows marked by mature specimen hedgerow trees and wooden fencing, particularly associated with Street Farm. Landform, trees along the edge of the settlement, Park Copse and King's Copse all contain and restrict views into an out of the settlement forming a relatively contained visual setting. Beaurepaire Park lies in close proximity to the south-western edge of the village but has no visual relationship with the settlement.

The majority of the south-western edge of the settlement is enclosed by high hedgerows or tree planting, softening the urban form and integrating it into the landscape. New housing near Tudor Farm and new office buildings at Street Farm are less well integrated into the landscape, however, Park Copse screens views from the south.

Entrance from the south-west is relatively abrupt along two narrow, enclosed lanes.

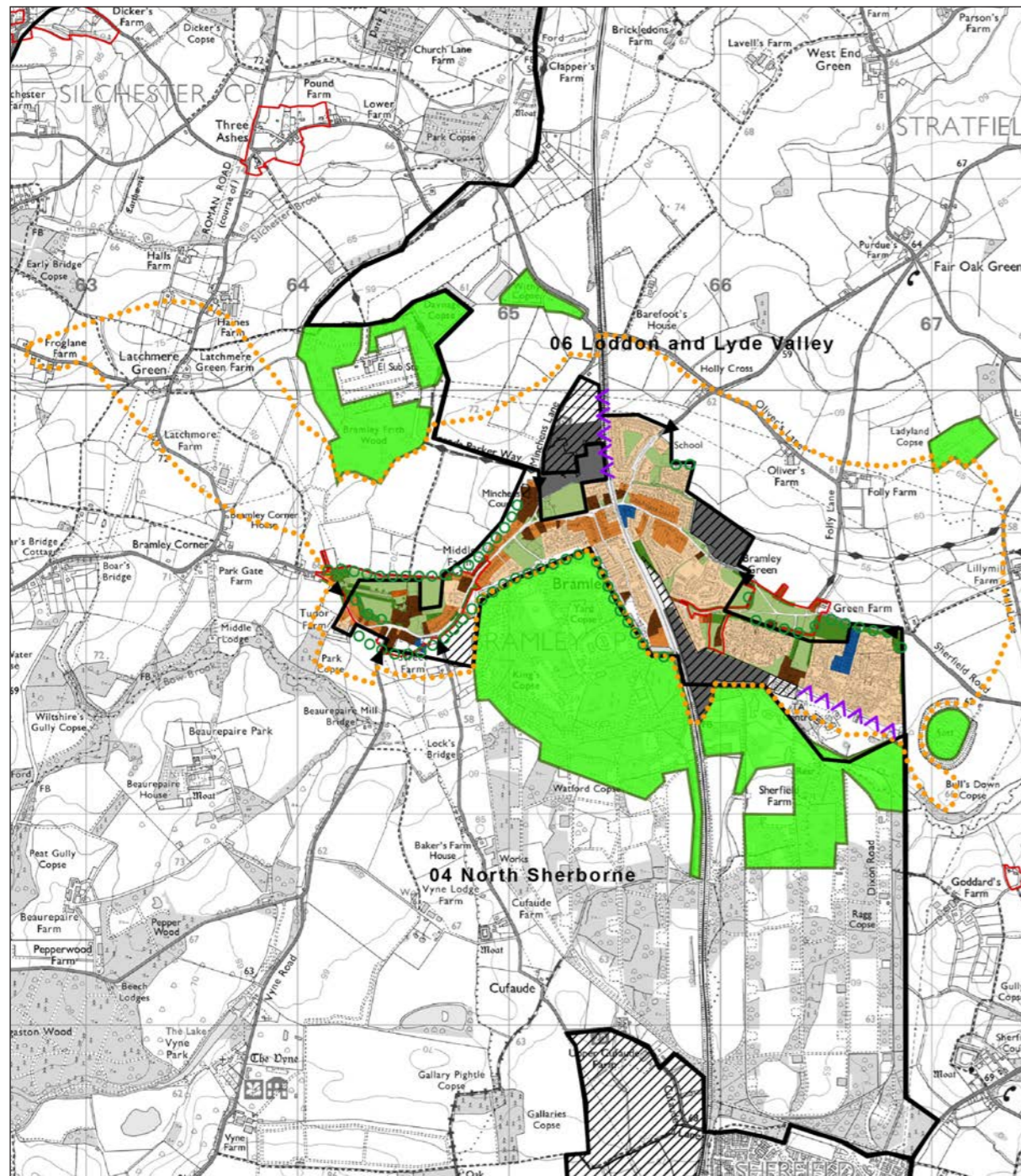


Figure 16 Bramley and Bramley Green Landscape Setting and Settlement Character

| KEY |  | Settlement Character: |   |
|-----|--|-----------------------|---|
|     | Character area boundary                  |                       | Historic development up to 1850         |
|     | View from high points                    |                       | Later 19th century Development          |
|     | River corridor/ floodplain               |                       | 20th century linear & individual houses |
|     | Approximate visual setting to settlement |                       | 20th century housing estates            |
|     | Prominent ridgelines                     |                       | 21st century housing estates            |
|     | Prominent woodland blocks                |                       | Modern commercial development           |
|     | Soft well integrated edge                |                       | Woodland within urban area              |
|     | Strong linear boundary                   |                       | Open space within urban area            |
|     | Separation between Settlements           |                       |   |
|     | Key approach/ gateway                    |                       |   |
|     | Conservation area boundary               |                       |   |
|     | Permitted/ allocated                     |                       |   |

### Bramley and Bramley Green Settlement Character

The historic part of Bramley lies at its western end, forming a cluster of old buildings dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries to the south of the church, around the junction of The Street with Vyne Road. The older buildings are timber framed. The Manor House is a good example with its close studding, a sign of the quality of the building. Most of the timber framed houses have mellow orange brick infilling. Brick became the main material from the 17th century, under roofs of plain clay tiles, although a few thatched roofs survive. Slate is occasionally used.

Around the middle of the 19th century, as part of the Duke of Wellington's estate, a number of good quality cottages were built in the picturesque style. These have cast iron casements with decorative glazing bars, fish-scale tile hanging to the upper storeys, and gables with carved bargeboards. Some older buildings, such as Old Bells and Lime Tree Cottage with its adjoining barn, were also given this treatment. These buildings all give this part of the settlement the character of a Victorian estate village.

A separate, looser, cluster of old buildings survives around Bramley Green to the east where the unfenced road crosses the Green, which is enclosed around its edges by mature trees. There are other old buildings and farm groups such as Middle Farm, Beech Farm and Stocks Farm with its terrace of worker's cottages and old timber granary, which are now scattered among the more recent development. Most of the farm buildings have weatherboarded walls on brick plinths, and clay tile roofs, and most have been converted either into commercial uses (as at Street Farm) or residential uses (at Middle Farm and Stocks Farm). Church Farm and Green Farm remain as working farms, and still retain some of their traditional buildings.

The railway cuts through the middle of the present settlement, where there is much mid-20th century development. Later housing estates have been built to the east, around Bramley Green. These are mostly contained by mature perimeter planting, and open spaces have been retained along the sides of the main road and around the green. Modern commercial office development has taken place at Campbell Road.

### Bramley and Bramley Green Conservation and enhancement priorities

- Retain important internal open spaces such as the triangular area between Gray's House and Old Bells, and its line of trees;
- Conserve the historic buildings and ensure the continued protection of the conservation areas;
- Retain the open rural character of Bramley Green with its unfenced road and mature tree-lined edges;
- Retain the vista across the allotments and graveyard to the church tower;
- Ensure that any new development reflects the local character of its surroundings, e.g. through the use of traditional materials and building forms;
- Conserve and enhance existing trees, within and adjacent to the settlement, that contribute to forming a soft, well integrated, edge to the settlement;
- Any new development should be carefully designed to avoid opening up new, more extensive, views of the built form beyond the existing visual setting;
- Encourage pedestrian access to the surrounding countryside wherever possible; and
- Conserve and manage wooded Iron Age Plateau Fort within its open, arable setting, retaining its distinct form and its visibility from the road.